THE BRITISH WEST INDIAN PRESS IN THE AGE OF ABOLITION

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ABSTRACT

This thesis studies the West Indian press from three perspectives. The first examines newspapers as economic entities, and involves an analysis of capital, equipment, patterns of ownership, and workforce. This section concludes with an examination of the social and economic standing of colonial editors.

The second approach concentrates on the political role of the press during a period of tension. The relationships between the press and the component parts of colonial society are discussed seperately. The complex relationship between white-owned newspapers and the non-white sectors of the populace is considered. Much of this section is devoted to the free coloured press. The volatile relationship between newspapers of all political persuasions and the various branches of colonial Government is examined.

The third facet of the thesis grows naturally from the previous two modes of analysis, and is more implicit than explicit. It acknowledges the dangers in crudely identifying editorial columns as public opinion, but suggests that events involving the press constitute a series of snapshots exposing details of colonial life largely absent from official correspondence.

The conclusion of the thesis attempts to chart some aspects of the political culture of the colonies. It argues that participatory impulses, long present in white society, received a series of stimuli during the 1820's and 1830's which greatly increased colonial political activity. For the press this led to the development of politically-motivated free coloured newspapers and a defensive invigoration of planter newspapers. Thus, there was a broadening of colonial political culture, but in ways which reflected the different priorities of the white and free coloured groups. In slave-based societies these differences generated irreconcilable conflicts, many of which were both revealed and sharpened by the involvement of the press.

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PREFACE

This study seeks to explore some of the salient problems and issues that arose because of the politicisation of West Indian newspapers which occurred in the 1820's and early 1830's. The years leading to abolition were critical ones in nineteenth-century West Indian history and the bulk of the thesis concentrates on events during this period. However, I have left chronological boundaries flexible in order to accommodate incidents which occurred in slightly earlier and later periods. The thesis is based on a comparative approach to themes which have emerged as being important in the development of the press in this period.

My core source was the substantial collection of West Indian newspapers housed at the Public Record Office at Kew and at the British Museum Newspaper Library at Colindale. Newspapers that were published in Antigua, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Vincent, and Trinidad, have survived in varying quantities from the 1820's and 1830's. Geographically the thesis takes in the whole of the British West Indies, but within this range the spread of material is highly uneven. Generally, I have concentrated on the role of those newspapers which had a high political profile; but I have paid less attention to Jamaican newspapers than might be anticipated. I acknowledge that a thesis which seeks to account for the political role of the West Indian press might be expected to include in-depth analysis of newspapers from the colony that was the most important British possession in the region. However, the omission of such an analysis is explained by two reasons. Firstly, the most politically-interesting Jamaican newspaper of the period - The Watchman - has been thoroughly researched by other scholars interested in the political role of the Jamaican free coloureds.[1] Secondly, the large number of Jamaican newspapers and the volume of material connected with the Jamaican press probably constitutes a thesis

[1]See Mavis Campbell, The Dynamics of Change in A Slave Society: A Sociopolitical History of The Free Coloreds in Jamaica 1800-1865, Rutherford 1976; Gad Heuman, Between Black And White: Race, Politics, And The Free Coloreds in Jamaica 1792-1865, Oxford 1981.

in its own right. Despite these guidelines the study is not devoid of material connected with the Jamaican press, and I have attempted to introduce these references in distinct ways. Edward Jordon and Henry Loving - the editors of The Watchman and The Weekly Register of Antigua - are similar figures in ethnic and political terms, and events involving these two men have been specifically compared.[2] Some information from Jamaica, such as the revelation that poor, transient whites may have read newspapers to slaves, has been deemed too important to leave out; it is included as vital evidence in its own right.[3] In other cases I have used the Jamaican press as a touchstone, against which it seems reasonable to compare other West Indian newspapers. For example, the fact that Jamaican newspapers were forced to rely on advertising revenue to stay solvent has been taken as a norm for the rest of the West Indian press.[4]

I was unable to gain access to copies of all of the West Indian newspapers which were printed in this period; sometimes, as in the case of The Trinidad Chronicle and The St. Lucia Gazette, it seems that no copies survive. The problem of non-availability is a particularly serious drawback when discussing the newspapers of St. Kitts. This colony, long-settled by the British and with a tradition of printing newspapers dating back to the 1740's, had two important newspapers in the early nineteenth century, yet the only extant copies are held overseas. The American Antiquarian Society has substantial numbers of The St. Kitts Gazette and The St. Kitts Advertiser as well as of other West Indian newspapers from the 1820's and 1830's, but the Society limits the number of microfilms it makes available to researchers. This caused difficulties in choosing which newspapers to have microfilmed, but I eventually settled on The Weekly Register, The Antigua Herald, and The Grenada Free Press. The two Antiguan papers were selected because I knew they contained material which would substantially add to an important section of the thesis. The Grenadan paper was

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[2]See below Chapter 3.

[3]See below p.21.

[4]See below p.75-76.

selected primarily because every issue was extant from 1832, but it should be pointed out that this choice was made at a time when there was no indication that The St. Kitts Advertiser would come to occupy an important place in the thesis. The problem of non-availability was at least partially overcome thanks to the press interchange system which contemporary West Indian editors organised amongst themselves. This has ensured that articles from newspapers which have been lost or are now inaccessible have been preserved in the columns of papers which do survive and are accessible. I have used such articles from The St. Kitts Gazette, The St. Kitts Advertiser, and other papers, to encompass as wide a selection of colonial newspapers as possible.

For the historian newspapers provide viewpoints on colonial life that are distinct from those found in official correspondence and records. During the 1820's newspaper editorials became an important part of the public and political life of the colonies, but they were the private work of individuals unrestricted by the political constraints of high office. Editors fully exploited 'the freedom of the press' in ways which often gave their newspapers the qualities of indiscipline and scurrility so often complained of both by Government officials and private individuals. My analysis of the relationship between newspapers and the colonial authorities has been supplemented with information drawn from official sources. Particularly important in this respect were the despatches written by the Governor to the Secretary of State - usually indications that a particular newspaper had achieved at least a temporary prominence. Other sources have been consulted which at first sight might not seem specifically relevant to the press. For example, the Journals of the Barbadian and Dominican Assemblies proved invaluable in explaining the strained relationship which existed between the press and the authorities in those colonies during the 1820's.[5] The minutes of the Privy Council of St. Lucia contain details about the manner in which the first English newspaper was established in the colony in 1831.[6] Peripheral

[5]See below Chapter 5.

[6]See below Chapter 6.

information about the press was gleaned from sources such as the colonial Blue Books which provided clues as to the status of printers employed by the colonial Governments and the value of Government printing contracts. Thus, this thesis is a balance between individualistic press accounts of various incidents and official versions contained in the records of the colonial authorities. The combination of the two has revealed much of the complex political role played by the West Indian press in this period.

CHAPTER ONE: THE WEST INDIAN CONTEXT

By the 1820's and early 1830's, newspapers in most of the British West Indian colonies had, in terms of titles, price,[1] size, and layout, developed along broadly similar lines. This view of colonial newspapers suggests a high degree of regional uniformity, but it does not reveal differences in the press between individual colonies. A simple way of illustrating the most basic variation in development is to take a point in time and list the number of newspapers in circulation. This is a limited indicator; it ignores the instability of the printing trade, the rapid turnover of newspapers, and it does not show varying degrees of technical and political sophistication. However, it does give an immediate sense of the unevenness of press development. In 1830, ten newspapers were published in Jamaica; three in Barbados and three in Trinidad; two in Antigua, St. Kitts, Grenada, St. Vincent, and Demerara-Essequibo; and one in Dominica, Tobago, and Berbice.[2] No newspapers were published in Nevis, Montserrat and St. Lucia.[3] Apart from the predictable facts that the Jamaican press was numerically superior, and no papers were printed in the two smallest colonies, there seems to be no obvious pattern; printing had become established in most of the colonies. The oldest group of Legislative colonies was well served by newspapers, as were two of the colonies acquired from France in the second half of the eighteenth century and given Legislative status. Two of the four West Indian Crown colonies were also well

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[1]See appendix.

[2]Compiled from L.J. Ragatz, A Guide For The Study of British Caribbean History, 1763-1834, Including The Abolition And Emancipation Movements, Washington 1932; Howard Pactor, Colonial British Caribbean Newspapers: A Bibliography And Directory, Westport 1990; and from my own research. It is possible that this list is inaccurate due to the confusing nature of the sources. For example, colonial newspapers often referred to the same contemporary by slightly different names. It is also possible that there were ephemeral newspapers published in 1830 of which no record survives.

[3]The St. Lucian French language newspaper L'Impartial closed in July 1830.

supplied by newspapers.[4] Evidently, there were no insurmountable barriers to setting up newspapers in the majority of British-controlled territories in the region.

The spread of printing throughout this part of the British Empire took place in societies identical in one crucial respect; they were all slave-based monocultures (or near monocultures), racially stratified. British West Indian society at this time has been pictorially represented as an isosceles triangle divided into three racial groups, with whites at the apex, free coloureds and free blacks in the middle section, and slaves at the base.[5] Economic and social mobility was possible within each group and through manumission slaves could move into the free population, but generally the racial hierarchy was a rigid construct. Slavery as an economic and social institution maintained by coercion dominated colonial society. White masters exacted punishing labour from their slaves, and consolidated their dominance of society by extending their power into the political, social, and cultural arenas. Out of this situation there inevitably developed a clash of interests between masters and slaves. This was so fundamental that one scholar has concluded that for two hundred years the British West Indies saw a kind of low intensity warfare which periodically erupted into violent rebellions.[6] For the press this situation had critical implications and raised crucial questions about the role - deliberate or inadvertent - of newspapers in such societies. A fundamental contradiction existed in the colonies between the need for the white ruling class (and supportive elements of the free coloured population), to

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[4]Berbice was united with Demerara-Essequibo in 1831 to form British Guiana. Sir Alan Burns, History of The British West Indies, London 1965, pp.644-645.

[5]Douglas Hall, Five of The Leewards 1834-1870, London 1971, p.9.

[6]Hilary Beckles, 'The Two Hundred Year War: Slave Resistance in The British West Indies; An Overview of The Historiography,' The Jamaican Historical Review 13, 1982, pp.1-10.

maintain social stability, and the uncontrolled circulation of politically controversial newspapers. Such newspapers had the potential to undermine the already weak cohesion of societies composed of mutually antagonistic classes, and the fact that outspoken political papers did emerge in these societies is paradoxical. The great dilemma for colonial editors during the 1820's grew from an urge, seemingly irresistible, to publish political material in spite of the dangers that this entailed. Passive journalism which was confined to official and economic news posed no intrinsic challenge to colonial stability. Newspapers based on this sort of journalism did exist in the form of official Government Gazettes, and those privately-owned newspapers such as The Essequebo [sic] And Demerary Gazette and The Barbados Mercury whose editors exercised self-censorship. However, such papers came to be overshadowed and displaced in the 1820's by newspapers based on a British tradition of journalism which had a marked political emphasis on irreverent challenges to authority. The contradiction inherent in the publication of such newspapers in slave-based territories was part of a general problem concerning the availability of knowledge in societies which from a white point of view were necessarily repressive. In a sense newspapers played a similar role to that of the missionaries who worked in the West Indies; both unwittingly imparted knowledge to slaves, a process which could not avoid weakening the basis of colonial society. The strains which this created sometimes became too great to contain.[7]

Given the well-established tendency for the British press to engage in political confrontations with authority, it would have been surprising if British colonies had not

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[7]This is explored from the point of view of missionaries by Patricia Rooke in her essay, '"The World They Made" - The Politics of Missionary Education to The British West Indian Slaves, 1800-1833,' Caribbean Quarterly 18, 3-4, October 1978-January 1979, pp.47-67.

developed strong press traditions. It seems only natural that British colonists should have introduced various aspects of British life into the colonies. Despite the dangers that were posed to social stability by a free press - dangers that were openly acknowledged by many contemporaries - there is no evidence that British colonists in the West Indies wanted to abandon this particular aspect of British culture. Much of the evidence which does exist points to the opposite: a phenomenon experienced in other British colonies.[8]

The first newspapers independent of colonial Government control in New South Wales, Van Diemen's Land, and the Cape appeared in the mid-1820's. In spite of the hostility of the Governors in these colonies, the editors of the papers concerned fought for the freedom of the press, and appear to have enjoyed significant levels of public support.[9] In the Canadas newspapers had first appeared in the late eighteenth century, but politically important papers such as The Quebec City Mercury and The Montreal Herald, which catered for English-speaking merchants, appeared slightly later in 1805 and 1811 respectively. By the 1820's the position of Canadian editors was still precarious. Libel cases were common and there were also more subtle ways of colonial authorities showing disapproval of newspaper conduct. In 1826, the Upper

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[8]The connections between the West Indian press and newspapers in other parts of the Empire did not just exist on the abstract level of shared editorial principals. Members of the Howe family which ran The St. Kitts Gazette were involved with the press in New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land. William Drape of The New Era in Sierra Leone was related to John Drape, editor of The St. Vincent Advertiser. See R.B. Walker, The Newspaper Press in New South Wales 1803-1920, Sydney 1976; also Roderick Cave, 'Early Printing And The Book Trade in The West Indies,' The Library Quarterly 48, 2, 1978, p.186.

[9]See Australian Dictionary of Biography, Melbourne 1966-1990: Vol. II, 582-589, 570-572, William Wentworth and Robert Wardell, co-editors of The Australian (October 1824); Vol. I, 500-501, Edward Hall, editor of The Monitor (May 1826); Vol. I, 86-87, Andrew Bent, editor of The Hobart Town Gazette And Van Diemen's Land Advertiser (1821). Dictionary of South African Biography, Johannesburg 1968-1987: Vol. I, 656-658, Thomas Pringle; Vol. II, 275, 225-227, George Greig, and John Fairburn. These men were all involved with The South African Commercial Advertiser (1824).

Canadian Assembly withheld payment for printing work from Francis Collins of The Canadian Freeman because of the paper's attacks on the Lt. Governor, Sir Peregrine Maitland. Political differences sometimes turned to violence. The offices and equipment of William Lyon Mackenzie's reform newspaper, The Colonial Advocate, were destroyed in June 1826 by a group of young Tories who disliked the paper's politics. MacKenzie's victory in the resulting court case gave him the financial impetus which helped launch his political career.[10] In India, the press was censored between 1799 and 1818, and even after this date guidelines for newspaper conduct were still in place. After 1818, however, their enforcement became the duty of the judiciary rather than the executive. In Madras there was no press freedom, while in Calcutta the newspaper which engaged most attention was The Calcutta Journal, under the editorship of James Buckingham. In the early 1820's Buckingham was warned several times about his editorial conduct, and in February 1823 The Journal was finally suppressed and Buckingham deported. A new Governor arrived in 1828 and restrictions were thereafter lifted on the press.[11]

The publication of newspapers in the British West Indies had become an established convention in societies with distinct economic, demographic, and racial identities. These factors are crucial when trying to account for the evolution of the printing industry. However, they are interlocked in such a complicated way that even a basic analysis of the circulation and readership of West Indian newspapers is difficult. Many colonial papers were subscriber-only publications. In June 1820, The

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[10]See Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Toronto 1966-1990: Vol. VI, 164-165, Francis Collins: Vol. IX, 496-508, William Lyon MacKenzie. See also the entries on various other journalists.

[11]William Wickwar, The Struggle For The Freedom of The Press 1819-1832, London 1928, pp.275-278.

Barbados Mercury appealed to half-yearly subscribers to renew their subscriptions by 1 July, 'so as to enable the Publisher to be prepared with a sufficient number of impressions on the first day of publication.'[12] The Guiana Chronicle approached 1821 with a similar request which would enable the editor to print enough copies to cover the subscriber list.[13] Shortly after The Barbadian began publication in December 1822 the editor wrote 'it is indispensably necessary that he should know precisely how many *paying* subscribers he is to reckon upon, that he may be guided as to the number of copies with which he is to begin the year.'[14] This limited production was probably the result of laborious printing methods, financial insecurity, and narrow profit margins; the latter factors were imposed on colonial editors because they worked in places that were geographically small with correspondingly small numbers of potential subscribers. This probably made them reluctant to risk large print runs which might not then be bought. When major news was received - such as important Orders in Council of 1823 and 1831, or the Act for Abolition - these considerations were almost certainly waived, and extra copies would be printed to cope with anticipated demand. Given the financial insecurity which plagued the printing trade, it would seem likely that the practice followed by The Mercury, The Barbadian, and The Guiana Chronicle was commonplace. However, comments made by Henry Loving, the editor of The Weekly Register of Antigua, suggest that not all papers followed it and some editors at least catered for the casual purchaser. In 1832, Loving testified before the

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[12]The Barbados Mercury, 24 June 1820.

[13]The Guiana Chronicle, 29 December 1820.

[14]The Barbadian, 28 December 1822.

Commons Select Committee on the abolition of slavery, and was asked if The Register circulated among the slave population. He replied:

> I think so.
>
> Is it read by them?
>
> I suppose so; they are not my subscribers, but a great many papers are purchased for ready money by persons who do not take it by the year, and consequently I do not know who the persons are.[15]

Loving did not mean that slaves could openly purchase copies, but that members of the free population not on the subscriber list could buy the paper. The Register then found its way into the slave population through channels which will be discussed below.[16]

Although it is clear that at least some colonial newspapers were subscriber-only publications, there is a lack of detailed evidence for circulation figures. This is puzzling; most colonial papers engaged in editorial self-aggrandizement and it might have been expected that boasts about the number of subscribers would have featured regularly. However, this is not the case. Those circulation figures which have been found are questionable for various reasons. There are secondary sources which purport to quantify the circulation of a Barbadian paper in the first decade of the nineteenth century and the Jamaican press some time in the early 1830's. However, the reliability of these sources should be treated with caution. The first source states that around 1806 The Barbados Mercury had a subscriber list of six hundred and sixteen, but no

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[15]*Select Committee on The Extinction of Slavery in The British Dominions* P.P. 1831-1832 (721) XX (hereafter *Select Committee*). Testimony of Henry Loving, p.160.

[16]See below pp.19-22.

primary reference is given.[17] The source for the Jamaican press states that The Jamaica Despatch And New Courant had five hundred and eighty subscribers; The Royal Gazette one hundred and five; The Watchman sixty-five; and The Kingston Chronicle fifty-five.[18] Other sources claim that The Jamaica Despatch had a maximum circulation of one thousand four hundred, but no references are provided.[19] The first set of figures for the Jamaican press appears at first sight to be inordinately low given that Jamaican whites have been described as highly politicised in this period.[20] If this was the case, they do not seem to conform to the view that the politicisation of a society is connected with the rising sale of newspapers.[21] The second figure for The Jamaica Despatch appears rather more plausible, but the lack of a primary reference precludes automatically accepting it.

I have found only four primary sources which mention circulation figures for other colonial newspapers and these would appear to cast further doubts on the reliability of the Jamaican figures. The largest number of subscribers - seven hundred out

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[17]Cave, 'Early Printing,' p.181.

[18]W.L. Burn, Emancipation And Apprenticeship in The British West Indies, London 1937, n. p.273. Burn cited the reference C.O. 140/138, which contained a report to the Jamaican Assembly on the island's press. I have checked C.O.140/138 but it is an Appendix to the proceedings of the Assembly for the year 1845. There is no sign of the report Burn mentioned. Other historians have also quoted Burn's figures. See Campbell, Dynamics of Change, p.161. Campbell does not provide a reference; Philip Curtin, Two Jamaicas: The Role of Ideas in a Tropical Colony, Cambridge Mass. 1955, p.57.

[19]Roderick Cave, '"To Instruct And Enlighten The Negro" The West Indian And Its Failure,' Journal of Newspaper And Periodical History I, 1, 1984, p.20. Cave quotes this figure in several other articles.

[20]See for example, Mary Turner, Slaves And Missionaries - The Disintegration of Jamaican Slave Society 1787-1834, Illinois 1982, pp.150-151; Richard Hart, Slaves Who Abolished Slavery - Blacks in Rebellion, Kingston 1985, p.247.

[21]For an analysis of mid-eighteenth century Britain in this respect see John Brewer, Party Ideology And Popular Politics at The Accession of George III, Cambridge 1981, Chapter 8.

an estimated free population of six thousand - is for The Guiana Chronicle.[22] The probability that a Demeraran newspaper had managed to establish a higher circulation than any of its Jamaican contemporaries within a much smaller free population is questionable. The second figure which has been found is for a Barbadian paper which had originally been published in Demerara. This was The Barbados Colonist And Sentinel, a paper edited by William Towart who had previously published The Colonist in Demerara. When the Lt. Governor suppressed The Colonist in September 1824 Towart left Demerara to re-establish it in Barbados, where he apparently devoted much column space to attacks on the Demeraran Lt. Governor and the First Fiscal. According to The Dominica Chronicle, which published Towart's obituary in June 1826, The Sentinel retained five hundred Demeraran subscribers; there was no indication of the strength of sales in Barbados.[23] If these figures are accurate then the total number of newspaper subscribers in Demerara-Essequibo stood at 1,200 - some 20% of the total free population. The third figure cannot really be presented as the circulation of the paper in question, although it could perhaps be taken as an upper limit for its circulation. In March 1826, The Trinidad Guardian ran an advertisement in which the editor offered to buy back copies of numbers one, two, three, four, and twelve of the paper which had sold out. The advertisement mentioned that five

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[22]C.O.111/127, Alexander Stevenson's petition to Acting Governor of Guiana, Lt. Col. Courtnay Chambers, 3 May 1833, enclosed with Acting Governor Sir Charles Smith to E.G. Stanley (Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, April 1833 to June 1834), 31 May 1833, no. 7. Population figure for Demerara-Essequibo from Michael Craton, 'Proto-Peasant Revolts? The Late Slave Rebellions in The British West Indies 1816-1832,' Past And Present 85, 1979, p.105. It must be emphasized that any population figures from this period are no more than very rough estimates. I have given the white and free coloured population because this represents the maximum number from which a subscriber list would have been drawn. For various reasons the number of potential subscribers from this figure would have been much smaller.

[23]The Dominica Chronicle, 14 June 1826.

hundred copies had been printed of the early numbers of The Guardian. However, these may have been purchased by people who were merely curious about a new colonial paper; they might not have become permanent fixtures on The Guardian's subscriber list.[24] The final circulation figure which has emerged is again not entirely convincing. In December 1829, The Antigua Free Press made slightly ambiguous comments on this subject which seem to indicate a subscriber list of two hundred.[25] As with the figure for The Guiana Chronicle, taking into account the relative population sizes, this number undermines the reliability of the Jamaican figures.

Of course, crude circulation figures in no way show the real size and nature of a newspaper's readership, and the complexity of this subject must again be stressed. For example, it would be a mistake to assume that white-owned newspapers were purchased solely by whites, or that white population figures (which may be inaccurate anyway), could act as a guide for the circulation of newspapers. A newspaper's relationship with white society was not as simple as might be imagined, even though the majority of colonial newspapers were white-owned and specifically produced for other whites. The situation was complicated by class and other distinctions within the white elite.[26] These were so pronounced that one scholar has argued that subscriptions for most whites were prohibitively expensive, and this does seem to be correct -only the best-off whites could have actually subscribed to newspapers.[27] From the rural hier-

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[24]The Trinidad Guardian, 10 March 1826. The same figure is mentioned by Roderick Cave in 'The First Trinidad Guardian,' Publishing History 3, 1978, p.63.

[25]The Antigua Free Press, 11 December 1829.

[26]These distinctions persisted despite an increasing degree of social mobility within the white elite towards the end of the eighteenth century. See Elsa V. Goveia, Slave Society in The British Leeward Islands at The End of The Eighteenth Century, New York 1965, pp.207-208.

[27]Curtin, Two Jamaicas, p.57.

archy it is probable that resident proprietors, attorneys, and perhaps some overseers would have subscribed to newspapers. The income of an attorney varied according to how many estates he had under his charge. A Jamaican attorney with fifteen to twenty plantations would have had an income of some £8,000 to £10,000 currency per annum, which made a newspaper easily affordable. Jamaican overseers were said to have an income of around £200 currency a year, thus making a £6 subscription to a newspaper an expenditure of 3%. In the towns large merchants were probably subscribers, along with the professionals present in the colony, such as doctors and lawyers. White clerks in mercantile firms earned between £150 and £200 per annum, which possibly put a newspaper subscription within reach.[28] Lesser colonial whites - urban and rural - such as teachers, small retailers, minor clerks, and so forth, would probably have struggled to subscribe to a newspaper. The poor whites of Barbados would certainly not have subscribed to any of the island's three papers. For a Jamaican bookkeeper on a salary of about £80 currency or below, a subscription to a newspaper meant spending an unfeasible 7.5% of his total income.[29] Yet despite these restrictions on the actual sale of newspapers, it must be emphasized that poorer whites still formed part of the readership of the press because they would have had easy access to copies in taverns and elsewhere.

The actual readership of the West Indian press was far more complex than the basic premise of white-owned, white-purchased newspapers suggests. For example,

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[28]This information has been taken from Edward Brathwaite, The Development of Creole Society in Jamaica 1770-1820, Oxford 1971, Chapter 10.

[29]Curtin Two Jamaicas, pp.16-17. Goveia, Slave Society in The Leeward Islands, p.207-108, notes that John Pinney, an absentee planter of Nevis paid his *overseers* £80-£100 salary, and his *managers* £150-£200 during the final years of the eighteenth century. There is some confusion over terms here. Goveia seems to have used the term overseer to mean bookkeeper, and manager to mean attorney.

although whites obviously had an interest in preventing slaves having access to newspapers, they seemed to neglect this interest and sometimes ignored it completely. This enabled slaves to use newspapers, and thus they formed part of the readership of the press, but through ways which circumvented the need to purchase copies openly. It has been possible to determine some of the channels through which the contents of the colonial and British press filtered down into a largely illiterate slave population. In the British context this process has been described as 'bridging'; 'the transmission of printed information in traditional oral forms, the establishment of a link between the literate and non-literate.'[30] Most scholars either explicitly or implicitly accept that this activity took place in the British West Indies in the 1820's and 1830's.[31]

It is extremely unlikely that slaves would have had the wherewithal to afford a subscription to a newspaper, or that whites would have tolerated them openly buying newspapers - especially those papers which were noted for their political content. Accusations that papers were sold in this way were made, but these were politically motivated by the opponents of the particular papers and they are impossible to verify. In July 1833, James McQueen wrote to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, informing him that The Antigua Free Press was distributed and sold amongst the slaves for three farthings sterling a copy.[32] William Taylor, a witness before the 1832 Select Committee, claimed to know of a Jamaican slave who subscribed to The

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[30]See Brewer, Party Ideology And Popular Politics, p.155.

[31]See for example, Hilary Beckles, Black Rebellion in Barbados - The Struggle Against Slavery, 1627-1838, Bridgetown 1984, pp.94 and 108; Heuman, Between Black And White, pp.85-86; see also various articles by Michael Craton who accepts that this process took place.

[32]James McQueen (Editor of The Glasgow Courier, 1821 to c. 1830. McQueen had long-standing connections with the West Indies and was a committed propagandist for the planters), to Stanley, 15 July 1833, reprinted in The Barbadian, 16 October 1833.

Watchman.[33] Generally, however, whites thought that slaves gained access to the contents of newspapers through intermediaries. These intermediaries were thought to come from all sections of the colonial populace. The literate slaves from the slave elite - domestics and estate headmen - had easy access to newspapers and were said to convey information in the press to those who were illiterate. Although I have seen very little evidence from the slaves themselves which confirms this, it probably did occur on a widespread scale. For example, Robert Gardner, one of the leaders of the 1831 Jamaican slave revolt, claimed that his colleague Samuel Sharpe read newspapers.[34] Sharpe almost certainly put the knowledge he gained to specifically political use. Prior to the 1816 slave revolt in Barbados a literate slave called Ben James was supposed to have visited Bridgetown every Saturday in order to garner information contained in the press. Again, his use of the information is unclear, but it was probably political.[35] It is likely that a majority of whites believed that the bridging process took place in this manner. In the mid-1820's the Lt. Governor of Demerara-Essequibo commented:

> ... the colonial journals are very widely circulated, and are thrown about upon every owner's table throughout the country, where the household slaves have free access to them, and communicate what they thus learn, to the others.[36]

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[33]*Select Committee*, testimony of William Taylor, p.52. Taylor's evidence is rather ambiguous; he may have meant that the slave subscribed to The Christian Record.

[34]Hart, Slaves Who Abolished Slavery, p.252. A fact confirmed by a missionary, Henry Bleby, see p.255.

[35]Beckles, Black Rebellion in Barbados, p.94. This was on the word of two other slaves, William and Jack, who were both drivers.

[36]C.O.111/45, Sir Benjamin D'Urban (Lt. Governor of Demerara-Essequibo, 1824 to 1831), to Earl Bathurst (Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, June 1812 to April 1827), 15 September 1824, private. For a similar view, see the testimony of William Knibb before the *Select Committee*, pp.259 and 268.

There is also some evidence which points to whites and free coloureds contributing to the dispersal of information amongst slaves, but again nothing from those most closely involved. According to the Reverend John Barry, a Wesleyan missionary who had served in Jamaica and gave evidence before the 1832 Select Committee, there was a class of transient whites which engaged in the trafficking of information:

> There are men whom we call "walking buckras" in Jamaica, white men, who have served either as sailors, or as overseers, or bookkeepers upon properties, they are a perfect nuisance in the island, and these men beg about the country for the purpose of procuring rum or food, or lodging; they frequently take the newspapers with them, and read those papers to the negroes, in the different parts of the island, which is one of the great sources of information which the negroes possess.[37]

William Knibb spoke of army officers and their servants passing copies of newspapers to slaves and of free coloureds reading to slave audiences.[38] The idea that any whites - even transient ones - would have encouraged slaves to read newspapers seems rather questionable. However, the main point is perhaps not that this did or did not happen, but that whites obviously believed it to be happening. The type of reader-audience event referred to by Knibb and other witnesses represented the bridging point between the written culture of the press and the oral culture of the slaves. In the particular conditions of West Indian society the process whereby the former was transformed into the latter was open to a number of distorting factors; the reading ability and motives of the person conveying the information; the understanding of the listeners,

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[37]*Select Committee*, testimony of the Reverend John Barry, p.105.

[38]Ibid. p.259.

and their discussions about what they had heard. In the colonies which had been held by other European powers there was the added difficulty of translation. All of these factors must have rendered the transfer of information inaccurate and haphazard. Following such an event, the dispersal of information would then have continued by word of mouth, perhaps in open ways which would escape the notice of whites; through the work songs of the slaves for example.

The strongest evidence which proves that the slave population formed part of the colonial press's readership are the references made by newspapers to the reader-audience relationship, and instances where colonial papers addressed articles directly to the slaves. In 1829, The Trinidad Guardian ran a piece which opened:

> We are aware that our paper is read to a large portion of our slave population; we sincerely trust that those who are so employed will take the trouble fully to explain to them this article...[39]

The Port of Spain Gazette spoke of Antiguan slaves listening to 'tattling newsmongers and counsellors,' and claimed that a rival Trinidadian paper, The Colonial Observer, actually employed people to read to slave audiences.[40] Among the outstanding direct addresses were two letters, both entitled *To The Labourers of Antigua*, written and published by the editor of The Antigua Free Press shortly before emancipation.[41] These urged the slaves to be calm as they faced the transition to full freedom. Earlier in 1834 the editor of The Antigua Herald had also addressed an article directly to the slaves of Antigua. Thomas Warner had confessed to being unsure about what printers

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[39]The Trinidad Guardian, 23 June 1829.

[40]The Port of Spain Gazette, 23 April 1831, 30 April 1833.

[41]The Antigua Free Press, 26 June, 31 July 1834.

should advise the labouring population 'because never actually having been workmen, they do not know, they can only believe, what would be the best advice.'[42] He settled for practical advice on agricultural techniques that would be needed by small peasant farmers - somewhat irrelevant given that there was no available land on Antigua.

Accepting that slaves either read newspapers, had newspapers read to them, or were aware of their contents by some other means, it seems highly likely that their acquisition of knowledge contributed to the slave rebellions which occurred in Barbados in 1816, Demerara in 1823, and Jamaica in 1831. A link between press activity and slave unrest was certainly recognised by contemporary whites. The Barbados Assembly's report into the 1816 rebellion was published in January 1818. As well as claiming that Wilberforce's agents were at work in the colony, the report stated that the rebellion had originated:

> ... solely and entirely in consequence of the intelligence imparted to the slaves, which intelligence was obtained from the English newspapers, that their freedom had been granted them in England...[43]

The Lt. Governor of Demerara-Essequibo, Sir Benjamin D'Urban, described the process whereby the colonial press reprinted the contents of the British press which then reached a wide slave audience as 'one great combining cause' in the 1823 Demeraran revolt.[44] In Jamaica between July and November 1831, white opposition to proposals from the British Government for the amelioration of slave conditions was highly vocal and politically extreme. Much of this opposition crystallised in the colo-

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[42]The Antigua Herald, 25 January 1834.

[43]Quoted in Beckles, Black Rebellion in Barbados, p.100.

[44]C.O.111/45, D'Urban to Bathurst, 15 September 1824, private.

ny's press, and several witnesses before the 1832 Select Committee spoke of the destabilising effects of Jamaican newspapers prior to the 1832 revolt.[45] Through their network of information channels the slaves were in a position to gauge the political situation and probably used this information when they selected what they felt was an opportune moment to rebel.[46]

As well as contributing to these major rebellions in the final period of West Indian slavery, it is also probable that the press contributed to the nebulous rumours about freedom being withheld by the masters which swept through Caribbean slave populations. In 1823 in Barbados, the Governor issued a proclamation aimed at correcting the:

> ... unfounded reports [which] have been spread among the **SLAVES** in this Island, stating, that they shortly may expect their freedom.[47]

Similar rumours circulated among Dominican slaves later in the year. As a precaution the Governor of the colony also issued a proclamation in English and French which sought to repudiate these rumours.[48] In September 1831, slaves in several colonies apparently believed that emancipation would come on 1 October. The Trinidad Guardian advised whites to lynch anyone found encouraging this erroneous belief.[49] Estab-

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[45]See, for example, the testimony before the *Select Committee* of William Taylor, p.56; William Knibb, p.420; Vice Admiral the Honble. Charles Fleming, p.199; Samuel Baker, p.495.

[46]Mary Reckord, 'The Jamaica Slave Rebellion of 1831,' Past And Present 40, 1968, p.110; Michael Craton, Testing The Chains -Resistance to Slavery in The British West Indies, Ithaca 1982, p.295, also discusses the destabilising influence of the Jamaican press on the slaves.

[47]Proclamation of Sir Henry Warde (Governor of Barbados, 1821 to 1827), 10 June 1823. Printed in The Barbadian, 11 June 1823.

[48]C.O.71/61, Hans Francis Hastings, Earl of Huntingdon (Governor of Dominica, 1822 to 1824), to Bathurst, 11 January 1824, no. 84.

[49]The Trinidad Guardian, 30 September 1831.

lishing the precise nature of the connection between the press and these rumours and rebellions is difficult. However, it was clearly the case, as one scholar has argued about the Jamaican revolt, that 'although few [slaves] were able to understand the precise nature of events in England and the colonists' response.. the gist of the political situation was translated into easily remembered and amended anecdote, circulated endlessly among the population.'[50] The circulation of such information contributed much to the atmosphere of crisis which characterised the colonies as abolition approached.

As well as slaves, the readership of newspapers must also have included elements of the free coloured population. In itself, the fact that most newspapers were white-owned and politically tailored for other whites did not prevent wealthy free coloureds from buying them. They may have had to do so out of necessity, as the press was the main way in which commercial information was circulated. Some free coloureds may also have purchased white-owned newspapers because of aspirations to white status, and from a desire to deny the African side of their origins. For poorer free coloureds the press was accessible through the same indirect channels used by the slaves. As vehicles of political discussions planter newspapers, owned by whites and ostensibly produced for whites, crossed racial boundaries with ease. Once outside white society newspapers were used by free coloureds and slaves for very different purposes to those envisaged by their editors. In vehemently defending white supremacy the white-owned planter press contributed to the political consciousness of the non-white sectors of colonial society, and in the broadest sense arguably brought the abolition of slavery closer.

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[50]Reckord, 'Jamaica Slave Rebellion,' p.110.

Outlining the geographical spread of printing throughout the British West Indies and noting some of the dilemmas raised by publishing newspapers in slave-based colonies only partly explains the complex position of newspapers in this part of the Empire. It is also necessary to look at some of the societal variations between the colonies in order to highlight and explain noticeable differences in the content and status of newspapers. These differences can be accounted for by reference to some of the social, economic, and political developments which had occurred in different colonies; in certain ways the history of each colony was reflected in the way its newspapers had progressed.

Newspapers in the main islands of the oldest Legislative group - Antigua,[51] Barbados, Jamaica, and St. Kitts - were flourishing by the 1820's. There are several reasons which help to explain this situation. Firstly, there was the simple fact that printing was a long-established tradition. Although compared to the colonies of other European powers printing had arrived late in the British West Indies, it was firmly rooted by the 1820's.[52] At that point printing newspapers was a century-old tradition in Jamaica, and some newspapers in other colonies had been established under varying titles for decades. The Barbados Gazette was started in 1731 and continued until 1792; The Barbados Mercury was founded in 1762 and survived beyond the period under study. This also applied to The St. Christopher Gazette And Charibbean [sic] Courier

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[51]Due to the unique nature of the Antiguan press the colony will be dealt with in Chapter 3.

[52]See John Lent, Third World Mass Media And Their Search For Modernity - The Case Of The Commonwealth Caribbean 1717-1976, New Jersey 1976, p.23; John Lent, Mass Communication in The Caribbean, Iowa 1990, p.3; Roderick Cave, 'Printing Comes to Jamaica,' Jamaica Journal 9, 2-3, 1975, pp.11-17.

which first appeared in 1747, while The Antigua Gazette which was started in 1753 lasted until 1824.[53]

In Barbados and Jamaica printing had been bolstered by white populations numerous enough to support more than one newspaper. Although I have argued that the basic premise of white-owned newspapers purchased solely by other whites is flawed, in these two colonies the relatively large number of whites does help to explain the vitality of the printing industry. During a period when newspaper circulations were small, sufficient numbers of subscribers and advertisers could evidently be drawn from approximately 13,000 Barbadian whites and 20,000 Jamaican whites.[54] This was probably the most important factor in maintaining the viability of several competing newspapers. Newspapers in the lesser colonies lacked a comparable pool of potential white subscribers and advertisers; and this situation steadily worsened throughout the period because of the continued decline of the white population. In 1830, the white population of St. Kitts was estimated at only 1,600.[55] The available data give no indication of how this figure broke down in terms of age and sex, and there is no precise information on the class structure of the white elite of St. Kitts. However, the number of actual subscribers would have been considerably lower than this figure. This small population helped to put the colony's newspapers in a precari-

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[53]M.J. Chandler, A Guide to Records in Barbados, Oxford 1965, p.172; E.C. Baker, A Guide to Records in The Leeward Islands, Oxford 1965, p.72; Pactor, British Caribbean Newspapers, p.1.

[54]Population figure for Barbados taken from Hilary Beckles, '"Black Men in White Skins": The Formation of A White Proletariat in West Indian Slave Society,' The Journal of Imperial And Commonwealth History 15, 1, October 1986, p.18. White labourers, who would probably have been unable to afford a newspaper subscription, constituted over two thirds of this figure. Population figures for Jamaica in the early 1830's vary widely. For example, in his essay 'Proto-Peasants?,' p.109, Michael Craton gives 25,000; Heuman, Between Black And White, p.7, gives 16,600.

[55]Edward Cox, Free Coloreds in The Slave Societies of St. Kitts And Grenada, 1763-1833, Knoxville 1984, p.13.

ous financial position; fewer people meant fewer subscribers, less advertising revenue, and narrower profit margins. Yet St. Kitts supported two newspapers throughout and after the period under study; The St. Kitts Gazette and The St. Kitts Advertiser under their various titles lasted well over a century. A plausible explanation for this can be found by looking at the ownership of the two papers, which in both cases amounted to printing dynasties. The St. Kitts Gazette was owned by the Howe family, a connection which stretched back to the 1740's, when the paper was founded by Thomas Howe.[56] The name of the editor in the 1830's is unknown, but presumably his editorial decisions - shaped by the racial mores governing white conduct - sought to generate circulation primarily within the white population. Arguably, there was room in the colony for only one such newspaper; it is unlikely that less than 1,600 white subscribers could have supported three white-owned, planter newspapers as did Barbados. The colony's second newspaper probably prospered because it was the centre-piece of a free coloured printing dynasty which lasted for many years. This meant that The St. Kitts Advertiser was locked into a different relationship with St. Kitts society than that of its rival. The position of The Advertiser was possibly stronger than that of The Gazette for two reasons Firstly, there were almost double the number of free coloureds than whites in the colony - 3,000 in 1830.[57] Secondly, there is evidence that they had a strong sense of racial solidarity. This might have manifested itself in political and financial loyalty towards The Advertiser, comparable

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[56]Pactor, British Caribbean Newspapers, p.88.

[57]Cox, Free Coloreds of St. Kitts And Grenada, p.13. For a discussion of this free coloured printing dynasty see below Chapter 3.

to the free coloured support which existed in Jamaica and Antigua towards the free coloured newspapers of those colonies.

Although newspapers in Dominica, Grenada, and St. Vincent had much in common with their counterparts in the older group of Legislative colonies, different historical development had checked the growth of the press. The disruptive effects of conquest and reconquest in these colonies in the eighteenth century seems to have militated against press traditions becoming as strong as those in the older group.[58] French and British attacks disrupted colonial development and there were also internal sources of conflict. The Carib war on St. Vincent lasted between March 1795 and October 1796, during which time all available free men would have been required for militia duties.[59] Fedon's rebellion in Grenada was slightly shorter, lasting from March 1795 to June 1796. It too, must have required the same commitment from the militia, which would obviously work against the production and development of a newspaper.[60]

This disruption seems to have impacted on the press in two ways. In Dominica ephemeral newspapers appeared and disappeared rapidly. The first known Dominican paper - The Dominica Gazette - appeared in 1762, and in the following forty years at least eleven short-lived newspapers have been recorded in the colony.[61] In Grenada

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[58]Lent, Mass Communications in The Caribbean, p.8. For an account of Dominica in this respect see Wallace Brown, 'The Governorship of John Orde 1784-1793: The Loyalist Period in Dominica,' The Journal of Caribbean History 24, 2, 1990, pp. 146-177.

[59]For an account of the Carib war see Charles Shephard, An Historical Account of The Island of Saint Vincent, London 1971 (1st ed. 1831), Chapters 3-7.

[60]See Cox, Free Coloreds of St. Kitts And Grenada, Chapter 5.

[61]Pactor, British Caribbean Newspapers, pp.40-41. There is confusion over the names of these papers. It is possible that there were up to sixteen papers published in the colony. Many were probably little more than one-sided flysheets.

the history of the eighteenth century press was not as volatile; printers do not seem to have been tempted to chance their luck against political uncertainty. The Royal Grenada Gazette first appeared in 1765 and may have closed around 1788, but only one other paper was started in the eighteenth century. This was The St. George's Chronicle And New Grenada Gazette which first appeared in 1789; it had no rival until 1826.[62] Press growth was limited in similar fashion in St. Vincent. The first newspaper of any durability was The Royal St. Vincent Gazette and General Advertiser, established in 1784. Apparently, there had been a St. Vincent Gazette in existence as early as February 1773, but it does not appear to have survived long.[63] The St.Vincent Advertiser seems to have had a rival called The Register around 1810, but its first serious competitor appeared in 1826.[64]

The influx of French and British subjects and their slaves following the military successes of each power had left these colonies demographically more complex than the older Legislative colonies. As well as the common West Indian problem of maintaining the servility of the slave population, there were therefore, additional difficulties in reconciling different linguistic, religious, and national groups. The potentially dangerous implications for British administration of a colony with a large French element or a pervasive French influence had been shown by the Carib

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[62]Ibid. p.49.

[63]Shephard, Historical Account of Saint Vincent, p.30.

[64]There is some confusion over the St. Vincent press. Pactor, British Caribbean Newspapers, p.101, states that The Royal St. Vincent Gazette And Weekly Advertiser was probably the same paper as one he lists separately - The Royal St. Vincent Gazette. In fact there were two distinct Royal St. Vincent Gazettes. The first, The Royal St. Vincent Gazette And General/Weekly Advertiser, was established in 1784. The second - The Royal St. Vincent Gazette: By Authority - was established in 1826 at the request of the Governor, Sir Charles Brisbane (Governor of St. Vincent, 1808 to 1829). To avoid confusion I will refer to the first paper as The St. Vincent Advertiser, and the second as The St. Vincent Royal Gazette.

war and Fedon's rebellion. The picture is numerically imprecise, but we do know that by the 1820's Dominica and Grenada still had significant numbers - free and slave - of French-speaking Catholics. In 1824 on Dominica, there were fifty-six French proprietors who owned forty-eight coffee and fifteen sugar plantations. There were four merchants, and in total Frenchmen owned 3,134 slaves.[65] Anti-Catholic feeling permeated at least one Dominican institution of Government. In the mid-1820's, the Governor was so dismayed at the lack of cooperation from the Dominican Assembly that he recommended that Catholics be allowed to sit in the House. The Governor sought the views of the colony's Council, four of whom strenuously opposed such a move.[66] On Grenada, Catholicism predominated among the free coloureds and slaves. In the late 1820's religious issues still had the potential to destabilise the colony, as was shown by the activities of Anthony O'Hannan, a rebel Catholic priest who caused controversy because of his work with Catholic slaves and free coloureds.[67] The demographic composition of St. Vincent at this time is indistinct. Over a quarter of a century after the Carib war it is far from clear precisely what was left of the old French economic and political influence, but it does seems to have dwindled compared to thirty years previously. For example, a list of St. Vincent proprietors from the late 1820's shows virtually no French names.[68] The extent of the French religious, lin-

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[65]C.O.71/61, list of French Roman Catholic proprietors, March 1824, enclosed with Huntingdon to Bathurst, 24 March 1824, no. 98.

[66]Ibid. Enclosures.

[67]Cox, Free Coloreds of St. Kitts And Grenada, pp.117-118.

[68]Shephard, Account of Saint Vincent, appendix VI. It is not clear if this list is a definitive survey of the colony's proprietors.

guistic, and cultural legacy among the free coloureds and slaves is unclear, but presumably it persisted to some degree.

Despite a linguistically mixed population, editors in Dominica, Grenada, and St. Vincent published newspapers which were mostly in English. There were occasional advertisements in French, but the press contained no substantial material which might have attracted French-speaking subscribers.[69] This contrasted with the Trinidadian press; newspapers in that colony contained large numbers of advertisements in French, and news especially selected for the French-speaking population was published. These differences were possibly the result of the length of time which Dominica, Grenada, and St. Vincent had been under British control. It seems likely that the old French planting and merchant families would have learned enough English to glean the essential news which they needed; commodity prices, imports, ship arrivals, departures, and so forth.

Newspapers in the newer Legislative colonies were denied an adequate subscriber base with the result that they became heavily dependent on local Government printing contracts. In Dominica there are indications that these contracts had always been important; John Lowndes, a printer in the colony during the 1780's and 1790's, complained that the Governor favoured The Royal Dominica Gazette, presumably with lucrative official work. Lowndes made the complaint despite the fact that he was official printer to the Assembly.[70] By the 1820's The Grenada Free Press and The Dominica Chronicle were clearly relying on these contracts as financial crutches

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[69]This does not seem to have been the case with the Dominican press of the late eighteenth century, which was bilingual. See Brown, 'Governorship of John Orde,' p.147.

[70]Ibid. p.169. It is interesting that at this time the division of Government printing sustained at least two newspapers. At some point a single contract covering all printing work was drawn up which must have diminished the possibility that two or more newspapers could coexist.

to support businesses which would otherwise have been unprofitable. In the case of The Dominica Chronicle the paper was unable to continue without the contract; The Chronicle succumbed in the face of competition from a newspaper supported by the Assembly.[71] In St. Vincent there was a particularly bitter ten year press war over which of the colony's two newspapers was legally entitled to the printing commission from the executive. The fact that it was so acrimonious and drawn out suggests that each newspaper was fighting for its financial life. However, when the matter was eventually settled in 1835, both papers managed to survive, although they must have existed on the very margins of profitability. This situation was made even more difficult by the appearance of The St. Vincent Chronicle in 1835.

From December 1826 there were two newspapers in competition in Grenada, but as in St. Kitts the nuances of colour subtly influenced the situation. The population of Grenada in 1830 has been estimated at seven hundred and sixty-one whites and 4,033 free coloureds.[72] The Grenada Free Press and The Grenada Chronicle were therefore competing for subscribers from a total of less than 5,000. It is unclear how this number broke down in terms of nationality, age, sex, and literacy, but again it must be stressed that the actual number of potential subscribers was much lower. The Grenada Free Press was owned and edited by Alexander McCombie, a white Presbyterian,[73] and The Grenada Chronicle by William Baker, a free coloured. McCombie's zealous commitment to the planter class would have been well suited to the white

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[71]See below pp.79-80 and 189-196 for details of the events which led to the closure of The Dominica Chronicle.

[72]Cox, Free Coloreds of St Kitts And Grenada, p.14.

[73]The Grenada Free Press, 21 March 1832. McCombie was secretary of the colony's Presbyterian Committee.

British, Protestant element of the free population, and there is no doubt that this was his target group of readers. However, this did not drive Baker to tailor The Chronicle specifically for free coloured subscribers. For example, The Chronicle was vehemently opposed to the activities of the rebel priest O'Hannan among Catholic free coloureds. Baker turned his back on the biggest section of his own racial group in the colony, probably for reasons of nationality. The name William Baker suggests a man of part-British origin, and he seems to have identified with his own national group - white and coloured - rather than with Catholic free coloureds of French origin. In addition to this there was the paper's pro-slavery political stance. This was clearly designed to put distance between Baker and his part-African origins, and was perhaps also aimed at mollifying whites who were suspicious of a free coloured newspaper. In effect the target readership of the two Grenadan editors overlapped, with the result that the press was driven into keen competition. This made the Grenadan printing contract very important; a fact shown by the attempts Baker made to get it opened to public tender, and McCombie's equally strenuous defence of his privileged and lucrative position.[74]

Two final factors which are linked, help to explain the status of newspapers in all of the Legislative colonies, their constitutional framework, and the political customs which had evolved around it. The constitutional structure consisted of an executive, a bicameral legislature, and a judiciary. The legislature was made up of an Assembly, and a Council which acted as an upper chamber.[75] The franchise was limited, curtailing electoral politics. In 1834, there were 1,016 electors in Barbados;

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[74]See below pp.80-81.

[75]D.J. Murray, The West Indies And The Development of Colonial Government 1801-1834, Oxford 1965, p.24.

in comparison the electoral roll of Dominica in 1832 consisted of one hundred and fifty-three electors who chose the nineteen members of the Assembly.[76] Until 1838, seventy-five electors chose the fifteen members who sat in the St. Vincent Assembly, and in 1840 in St. Kitts there was one district where one elector chose three Assemblymen. In two others the members were selected by three and four voters respectively.[77] People from all groups within the free population were excluded from the formal political process: poor whites, and for most of the period under study, free coloureds and free blacks. In the majority of colonies these latter classes were unable to vote or stand as candidates regardless of whether they qualified under the franchise. Catholics also suffered from discrimination. During the early years of British rule the political position of Grenadan Roman Catholics had improved, but these gains were later rescinded. By the 1820's the position of Grenadan Catholics, and also those on St. Vincent, is unclear. In Dominica Catholics were allowed to vote in elections, but were unable to stand as candidates.

Limited political representation created colonial oligarchies. Local power was concentrated in the hands of white British planting interests and the influence of these factions pervaded all aspects of colonial life. During the period under study attempts were made by ruling cliques in several of the colonies to restrict the press. However these attempts failed - failures which were at least partly due to political pressure exerted by opinion outside the Assembly and Council. Despite the repressive nature of West Indian society in general, when it came to issues which were not directly con-

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[76]C.O.31/51, Journals of The Assembly of Barbados 1826-1834, 3 April 1834. C.O.71/74, Sir Evan Murray MacGregor (Governor of Dominica, 1831 to 1833; the Leewards, 1832 to 1833; Barbados and the Windwards, 1836 to 1841) to Viscount Goderich (Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, April 1827 to September 1827 and November 1830 to April 1833), 26 March 1832, no. 47.

[77]Paul Knaplund, James Stephen And The British Colonial System 1813-1847, Madison 1953, p.118.

nected with slavery or race white West Indian society was actually marked by a degree of political latitude. In this respect the value which whites generally placed on the virtues of a free press was probably enough to prevent the authorities from simply suppressing newspapers at will.

The increasingly political role which the press played during the 1820's strengthened a belief that newspapers were a vital part of political life. This growing importance dovetailed with older traditions of political behaviour in the colonies. Political assertiveness in the Assembly and the Council had long been a feature of political life, but there were also traditions of white participatory activity outside these structures.[78] Newspaper editorials represented an important extension of these traditions. Political changes in the period were so fundamental that they paved the way for the press to assume an important status. This consolidated its position in the fabric of political life, and made it even more difficult for the authorities to clamp down on newspapers which were deemed politically or socially troublesome. Thus, the political culture prevailing in the Legislative colonies to some extent forced the authorities to accept the presence of independent newspapers. This enforced tolerance was vitally important for those white-owned newspapers which emerged with political agendas very different to those of the planter press, and for political papers run by free coloureds. These editors benefitted from the same political latitude which had previously helped protect the editors of white planter papers when they had experienced political difficulties with the authorities. The colonial authorities could have resorted to the outright suppression of free coloured newspapers, but it would have caused a political furore.

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[78]Goveia, Slave Society in The Leeward Islands, p.53.

However uneasily the political system of the Legislative colonies accommodated independent and critical newspapers, the situation compared favourably to the colonies of other European powers. Repressive laws existed in the former Spanish and Dutch colonies of Trinidad, Demerara-Essequibo, and Berbice, and there is evidence that they had been invoked prior to British rule.[79] In 1790, the Spanish Governor of Trinidad suppressed La Gazeta, and deported the editor Jean Villoux, on the grounds that he had published inflammatory material about the French Revolution.[80] Five years later Governor Beaujon of Demerara-Essequibo felt it necessary to censor a newspaper because the editor had 'made it a vehicle for sedition and rebellion.'[81] Henry Breen, a mid-nineteenth century historian of St. Lucia, also observed that in the 1820's the press in the French islands of Martinique and Guadaloupe remained subject to rigorous censorship.[82] These legal differences had important consequences for the British press which developed in Trinidad, Demerara-Essequibo, Berbice, and St. Lucia, when these colonies came under permanent British control. The legacies of former Imperial powers contributed to the press becoming involved in confrontational situations unknown in the Legislative colonies. However, institutionalised hostility left over from the previous regimes was unable to restrict totally British newspaper development in Demerara and Trinidad. For example, the editor of The Guiana

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[79]The United provinces had a history of domestic press toleration. See Cornelius Ch. Goslinga, The Dutch in The Caribbean And on The Wild Coast 1580-1680, Assen 1971, p.69. Press freedom does not appear to have extended to Dutch colonies.

[80]See Bridget Brereton, A History of Modern Trinidad 1783 -1962, London 1981, p.30; Lent, Third World Mass Media, p.30.

[81]C.O.111/55, Statement by F.P. Van Berckel, 22 July 1826, enclosed with D'Urban to Bathurst, 7 September 1826, no. 35.

[82]Henry Breen, St. Lucia: Historical, Statistical, And Descriptive, London 1970 (1st ed. 1844), p.264. Who Henry Breen was is unclear but he spent thirteen years in St. Lucia around 1830-1843.

Chronicle introduced the political editorial as a standard feature before many of his counterparts in the Legislative colonies.

Demerara and Trinidad were of course slave territories and the press was therefore subject to the same pressures arising from this fact as were newspapers in the Legislative colonies. However, Demerara and Trinidad had experienced very different economic, social, and political histories. These had helped to produce newspapers that were distinct in several ways from the press in the Legislative colonies. Trinidad, for example, had a highly diverse free population which was numerically dominated by Catholic free coloureds of French origin. This situation had arisen as a consequence of the 1783 Cedula, introduced by the Spanish Government to stimulate the island's economic development.[83] Trinidadian free coloureds also differed from most other free coloured groups in the British Caribbean in that by 1813 many had become well established as landowners.[84] The longest-serving Governor in this period, Sir Ralph Woodford (1813-1828), felt that the anomalies of the colony's population contained potentially serious threats to British rule, so he tailored his political and personal attitudes to the free coloureds accordingly.[85] Woodford's evident belief that Trinidad was still only weakly attached to the British connection was shared by others in the colony. In 1826, twenty-four years after the Spanish had ceded the colony to the British Crown, The Trinidad Guardian stated:

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[83]Brereton, History of Modern Trinidad, pp.13-15.

[84]Carl Campbell, 'The Rise of a Free Coloured Plantocracy in Trinidad 1783-1813,' Boletin de Estudios Latino Americanos y Del Caribe 29, 1980, pp.33-53. There were also substantial numbers of free coloured landholders on Grenada, see Cox, Free Coloureds of St. Kitts And Grenada, p.61.

[85]Carl Campbell, 'Sir Ralph Woodford And The Free Coloureds: The Transition From a Conquest Society to a Society of Settlement, Trinidad 1813-1828,' Journal of Caribbean Studies 2, 2-3, 1981, pp.238-249.

> Our colonial conquests constitute as yet but precarious appendages; there is neither unity nor solidity in the fabric...[86]

The French free coloured class did not produce any editorial figures in this period comparable to Henry Loving in Antigua, Edward Jordon and Robert Osborn in Jamaica, Samuel Cable in St. Kitts, William Baker in Grenada, or Samuel Prescod in Barbados. Apart from Baker, all of these free coloured editors consciously tried to make their newspapers the political voice of the free coloured class in those colonies. In Trinidad it was unlikely that foreign free coloureds would have been allowed to engage in comparable political activity. Under the newspaper licensing system that operated in the colony a Governor such as Woodford would probably not have granted permission for a publication devoted to French free coloured political interests. If Woodford's assessment of the political situation was correct, dangerous consequences might have arisen from a paper which advocated the cause of people whose social status had declined under British rule.

Trinidadian editors were faced with practical problems arising from a linguistically-mixed population. In contrast to the editors in Dominica, Grenada, and St. Vincent who seem to have made little effort to create any general interest in their newspapers among the French-speaking population, Trinidadian editors made a conscious effort to seek subscribers and advertisers among the foreign element. Advertisements were printed in French and Spanish, and special sections were run devoted to news of specific interest to the French-speaking population. Editorially, The Port of Spain Gazette and The Trinidad Guardian expressed open sympathy for Catholics and the overall position of Trinidadian 'aliens.' For example on one occasion, The

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[86]The Trinidad Guardian, 24 February 1826.

Gazette called for an end to celebrations of the discovery of the Gunpowder plot on the grounds that these were offensive to the Catholic population.[87] This editorial approach may have been made necessary because of the relatively short period Trinidad had been under British control; the French language was still extensively used by colonists for practical, every-day communication. It was thus financially prudent for an editor to appeal in at least some ways to the numerically-dominant section of the free populace. Compelled to alter its contents by demographic factors, the Trinidadian press was also affected by the retention of Spanish legal and administrative practices hostile to the ideal of a free press. This influenced the interaction between the colony's Government and its press to the detriment of the latter.

British colonists on the South American mainland in Demerara-Essequibo and Berbice were also faced with alien governmental and legal traditions in colonies which were in many ways under-developed.[88] These different modes of governance caused problems for the press which were greater than in Trinidad. In fact, Demerara saw a struggle to establish a free press that was repeated nowhere else in the British West Indies. Although Demerara's basic status as a conquered colony was similar to that of Trinidad, the British did not have to come to terms with a demographic structure of comparable complexity. To some extent the mainland colonies had been demographically primed to accommodate the specifically British press which emerged

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[87]The Port of Spain Gazette, 6 November 1832.

[88]Alvin Thompson, 'Dutch Society in Guyana in The Eighteenth Century,' The Journal of Caribbean History 20, 2, 1985-1986, pp.169-191. Thompson notes that the first printing press did not arrive in Demerara until 1790. The first weekly newspaper appeared three years later.

in the second decade of the nineteenth century.[89] British capital had been invested in the Dutch mainland colonies since the mid-eighteenth century,[90] and when Demerara-Essequibo and Berbice were finally ceded to Britain in 1814 their economies were dominated by British subjects. The incursion of British colonists onto the mainland for well over fifty years had thus created a pool of readers which the press was able to exploit. Demographic factors did not influence the Demeraran press as happened with newspapers in Trinidad. The Demeraran press in the period under study did not print sections in Dutch and there was no need to tailor the paper to accommodate religious differences.[91]

The main problem for the Demeraran press was a result of British reluctance to alter the constitutional structure of the colony in a way that reflected the demographic changes which had taken place over fifty years. A situation evolved where The Guiana Chronicle, a flourishing newspaper with a seemingly supportive readership, was hemmed in by constitutional restraints which were in some ways anachronistic to the circumstances of the colony in the 1820's. This resulted in almost a decade of tension between the executive and the press, which forms probably the best illustration of the dilemma between the security needs of the white elite and the free circulation of political information and opinions in a slave territory.

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[89]Between around 1803 and 1810, the press had been a hybrid of Dutch and English. Ownership, for example, was mixed; The Essequebo [sic] And Demerary Gazette had been jointly owned for a time by Edward Henery and Nicolaas Volkerts.

[90]Vere T. Daly, A Short History of The Guyanese People, London 1975, p.71.

[91]Although issues of The Essequebo [sic] And Demerary Gazette and The Essequebo [sic] And Demerary Royal Gazette which I have briefly looked at for the period 1803-1815 did run extensive sections in Dutch, the practice seems to have died out in the years 1815-1820.

The development of the press in the third Crown colony, St. Lucia, contrasts sharply with Trinidad and Demerara. Although the colony was not in the position of Nevis or Montserrat, neither of which had a newspaper in this period,[92] its press experienced only very limited development. However, this was due to demographic rather than political reasons. In 1830, the white and free coloured population was still largely French, which would have made it commercially difficult for an exclusively English newspaper to survive.[93] St. Lucia followed the pattern seen in other disputed West Indian colonies, with no printing tradition of any strength emerging in the eighteenth century. In 1780, a St. Lucia Gazette was in circulation, possibly run by an itinerant printer called Joseph Berrow.[94] His Gazette was probably short-lived and in the short term it was succeeded by only one other French paper, La Gazette de Ste. Lucie.[95] In the 1820's two other French language newspapers, Courrier Des Antilles and L'Impartial were printed, but they closed in 1823 and July 1830 respectively. The one surviving copy of L'Impartial which has been found, if it is a typical example of the paper, indicates that it was technically primitive and devoid of political content.[96]

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[92]As late as 1837 even the colonial Government had no printing equipment on Montserrat: C.O.239/46, Lt. Governor Colebrooke to Lord Glenelg (Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, April 1835 to February 1839), 24 August 1837, no. 89. Pactor, British Caribbean Newspapers, pp.83 and 85, gives the 1870's as the earliest date for the appearance of privately-owned newspapers: The Montserrat Chronicle, 1875; and The Nevis Guardian, 1871.

[93]Anecdotal evidence only, no figures available. See, for example, C.O.253/39, George Busteed, (Secretary to the colonial Government, December 1829 to January 1832), to Col. Mark Bozon (Acting Governor of St. Lucia, 1831 to 1832), 25 July 1831, enclosed with no. 37. Busteed wrote: '... as the language, laws, and customs here are almost exclusively French with which I am very little acquainted... I am... excluded from intercourse or association with the inhabitants.'

[94]Cave, 'Early Printing,' p.169. Berrow also published papers in Dominica and St. Vincent.

[95]Pactor, British Caribbean Newspapers, p.93. The paper was renamed Gazette de Sainte-Lucie National et Politique in 1789.

[96]C.O.253/27, James Farquharson (Acting Governor of St. Lucia, 1830 to 1831, and 1832 to 1834), to Horace Twiss (Under Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, May 1828 to November 1830), 31 July 1830, no. 47. This despatch includes a copy of L'Impartial: Journal Politique, Commercial, et

St. Lucia at this time contrasted with Trinidad and Demerara in that it had newspapers published primarily for non-British colonists. The British may have allowed this because Courrier Des Antilles and L'Impartial were politically innocuous. An unknown writer who had access to early copies of these primarily French language newspapers described them as:

> ... principally mediums for the publication of official announcements, with occasional cuttings from European newspapers, and the effusions of the local French literati, reeking of the lamp, and bristling with malicious personalties, in a stereotyped style...[97]

In the other Crown colonies it is unlikely that the absence of Dutch and Spanish papers resulted from political objections by the British, as was probably the case with the French in Trinidad. More practical considerations may have been relevant. The Trinidadian Spanish population had always been small and by this time it must have been in sharp decline; this meant that an exclusively Spanish newspaper had little or no chance of becoming a profitable concern. The same problem applied to Demerara and Berbice where the Dutch population had been in continual decline for many years.

The St. Lucia Gazette And Public Advertiser, the first British newspaper of note in the colony, did not appear until January 1831, seventeen years after the island had been finally ceded by the French.[98] The circumstances surrounding the closure of The St. Lucia Gazette were a major setback to the development of the

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Litteraire de Saint-Lucie, 19 June 1830, Vol. VI. no. 24. Between 19 June and Farquharson's despatch L'Impartial closed.

[97]Writer to The Voice of St. Lucia, 19 July 1900.

[98]According to Pactor, British Caribbean Newspapers, p. 94, a paper called The St. Lucia Chronicle was being published in 1826. Breen does not mention the paper and no information has emerged on it.

colony's press. The paper's replacement was the official St. Lucia Gazette, from which political material was banned by the Governor. Another reason for the retarded development of the St. Lucian press was the fact that for many years there was a lack of printing facilities on the island; those that did exist were monopolised by the Government.[99]

The editors who worked in the British West Indies drew primarily on a British tradition of journalism for their inspiration. The St. Kitts Gazette and The St. Vincent Advertiser both headlined their editorial columns with quotations from Junius; *The Liberty of The Press is The Palladium of All Civil, Political, And Religious Rights of Freemen*, and *They Who Conceive That Our Newspapers Are no Restraint Upon Bad Men or Impediment to The Execution of Bad Measures, Know Nothing of This Country*. These statements neatly encapsulated the view that many colonial editors had of their papers by this time; as independent and critical assessors of colonial affairs which performed the same role as British newspapers. However, comparisons with the British press need to be carefully qualified. The context created by slavery meant that a colonial newspaper's relationship with the society which surrounded it was radically different to a newspaper's relationship with British society. The differences in economic structure and demographic makeup between Britain and the colonies were so great that the newspapers that developed represented a creole press tradition, as different as it was similar to the British press. In addition there were significant historical, political, and demographic, variations between the colonies. The interaction of these forces had given rise to important distinctions between newspapers in different colonies. It was clearly not the case, for example, that newspapers published

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[99]Breen, St. Lucia, pp.266-267.

in Dominica were in the same position as those published in St. Kitts or Barbados; or that Trinidadian or Demeraran papers were the same as those papers published in Antigua. Arguably, it is legitimate to speak of sub-creole press traditions developing within an overall Caribbean press tradition.

CHAPTER TWO: THE WORKING AND STRUCTURE OF THE COLONIAL PRESS

With the possible exception of Jamaica, it seems likely that none of the British West Indian colonies had the capacity to manufacture printing presses and equipment, all of which had to be imported.[1] While trying to establish The West Indian at Barbados, Samuel Hyde experienced difficulties procuring a printing press. In March 1833 Hyde ordered a press and types from New York because it was cheaper than importing from Britain, but by July the goods had still not arrived.[2] Publication of The West Indian finally started on 4 November 1833.[3] The expense of importing equipment meant that once it was in use it was often worked until exhausted. In the case of The Dominica Chronicle and particularly The Antigua Free Press, for example, the types were used almost to the point of illegibility.[4] Generally, however, the necessity of importing the tools of the printing trade does not appear to have caused any great problems, apart from in Montserrat, Nevis, and St. Lucia. In St. Lucia, even the colonial Government struggled to establish its official printing on a sound footing. In the mid-1820's, the capacity to cope with large amounts of printing was so limited that it had been necessary to send orders to neighbouring colonies, and French types had to be imported from Martinique in 1830.[5] In June 1832, the quality of Government printing

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[1]Cave, 'Printing Comes to Jamaica,' p.13. Although Cave suggests that early Jamaican presses might have been built in the colony, the manufacture of types was highly unlikely.

[2]The Barbadian, 17 July 1833.

[3]Ibid. 26 October 1833.

[4]See The Dominica Chronicle, 3 January 1827; The Antigua Free Press, 11 December 1829.

[5]C.O.253/29, Busteed to Bozon, 14 June 1831, enclosed with no. 24. C.O.253/39, Farquharson to Goderich, 25 June 1832, no. 82, enclosures.

had deteriorated to a level which prompted the Governor to order an enquiry to find out why it was so poor. It came to light that the Government printing equipment was in a such a dilapidated and neglected state that efficient printing was almost impossible.[6] Private printing was unknown until June 1838 when a printing press, owned independently of the colonial Government, was finally set up in St. Lucia to print The Palladium And St. Lucia Free Press.[7]

The printing technology which produced colonial papers was limited by the standards of the time. On 29 November 1814, The Times became the first British newspaper to be printed using steam-driven machinery,[8] and it is inconceivable that such machinery had been imported into the colonies by the 1820's. In May 1828, The Trinidad Guardian carried a report on the printing presses used by The Times which ran off 4,000 copies an hour. The report concluded that this represented the limits of printing technology '... beyond which it is all but impossible to conceive the rapidity of the process to be carried.'[9] Presumably, colonial newspapers were printed by hand on presses like the Stanhope model.[10] There is one detailed source, which although it is not for a privately-owned paper, does give an indication of the materials and the capital needed to set up a printing office. In 1822, the Governor of Trinidad, Sir Ralph Woodford, was on leave in London, and whilst there he made efforts to secure a fully equipped printing office for Charles Lloyd, who was to be employed as Government

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[6]Ibid.

[7]Breen, St. Lucia, p.268. An earlier attempt had been made in September 1836 to set up an independent newspaper, but it still had to be printed using Government equipment.

[8]A. Aspinall, Politics And The Press c. 1780-1850, London 1949, p.7.

[9]The Trinidad Guardian, 16 May 1828.

[10]Aspinall, Politics And The Press, p.7.

printer. The inventory that was drawn up lists all of the materials that were to be exported to Trinidad:

Great Primer Type. Roman & Italic - 200 lbs. £25.

Double Pica Type. Roman & Italic - 200 lbs. £25.

Ditto. English - 100 Lbs. £10.

2 Line Great Primer - 100 Lbs. £10.

Pica. Roman & Italic - 150 Lbs. £15.

Small Pica. Roman & Italic - 150 Lbs. £22. 10s.

Long Primer - 50 Lbs. £7. 15s.

8[?] Pica & 5 Line. Roman & Italic - 100 lbs. £10.

2 Line Great Primer - 50 lbs. £5.

2 Line Pica Black - 20 lbs. £3.

Sundry Type & different accents and fractions - £10.

Quotations & Leads - £10.

1 Large Demy Printing Press, second hand - £21.

Wood Furniture £4. Chairs £5 - £10.

Three King's Arms - £4. 10s.

4 Composing sticks & quantity of brass rules - £6.

6 Letter boards £3. 6 Frames £5. 2 Jacks £2 - £10.

1 Imposing stone & Frame - £3. 10s.

Bulks, poling, peal, mallet & pr. shears - £5.

Lye trough, Tar & sink - £7,

12 Pan cases for type - £7. 4s.

3 [illegible] ink - £7. 4s.

Sundries, fitting up - £10.

2 Reams Printing Demy - £3.

6 Single Crown - £6.

10 Foolscap - £15.

2 Ditto - £1. 10s.

2 Paper various - £2.

12 Skins Russia[?], 1 Ron Outsiders Demy, 1 Cutting

Press.

Total - £272. 3s.[11]

This proves that printing was within the reach of men of modest financial standing, and explains why so many colonists attempted to establish newspapers. Sometimes, as in the case of Abel Clinckett at The Barbadian, this was undertaken with no prior knowledge of printing and editing.[12]

No colony had indigenous paper and ink-making industries so these items also had to be imported. There are clear signs that the availability or otherwise of paper caused problems. In the case of some extant copies, it is possible to feel the poor quality of the paper used. Copies of The Antigua Free Press and The Trinidad Guardian have also been found where strips of paper were glued together to make the

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[11]C.O.295/55, Estimate of the expense of a complete small printing office. Filed in Sir Ralph Woodford (Governor of Trinidad, 1813 to 1828), to Robert Wilmot-Horton (Under Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, December 1821 to October 1827), 8 April 1822. This sum was considerably less than the estimated £390 for printing equipment Edward Baynes reported he needed to establish The West Indian in Jamaica in 1838. Expenses such as printing a prospectus and advertising the new paper added a further £90. See Cave 'To Instruct And Enlighten,' appendix.

[12]The Barbadian, 10 December 1823. Abel Clinckett was a Barbadian creole who ran this newspaper until c. 1854. His son took over as editor in 1856, and The Barbadian continued for another five years until it closed at the end of 1861. See The Barbadian, 14 December 1822, 7 October, 30 December 1861.

editions up to their standard size. Between December 1828 and January 1829, John Shoel, the editor of The Trinidad Guardian, seems to have had a particular struggle with this problem. Virtually all the issues of The Guardian from this period were produced in this way. If, when paper was scarce, the editor and his assistants were reduced to gluing pieces of paper together to facilitate production, it must have been an immensely laborious task, adding to what was already a physically demanding trade. Using printing presses which had probably not changed a great deal since the days of Caxton, it took two men an hour to run off two hundred and fifty sheets.[13] Of course, the West Indian climate compounded the arduous nature of printing work; William Stewart at The Dominica Chronicle claimed that the effort of cranking his own printing press had contributed to his chronic ill health.[14]

The size and layout of colonial newspapers in this period were of two main types. The most popular form was a demy folio - the 'broadsheet.' Papers such as The Antigua Free Press, The Weekly Register, The Port of Spain Gazette, The Trinidad Guardian, The Barbadian, The Barbados Globe, The Guiana Chronicle, and The St. Vincent Royal Gazette were large sheets of paper folded once to create four pages. It is also probable that both of the St. Kitts papers also followed this format.[15] The Dominica Chronicle, The Dominica Colonist, and The Barbados Mercury were smaller, but followed the same principle. The broadsheet papers contained either three or four columns of print per page. The other less popular format was the newsbook

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[13]G.A. Cranfield, The Development of The Provincial Newspaper 1700-1760, Oxford 1962, p.32.

[14]See The Dominica Chronicle, 6 September 1826. Stewart suffered from a hernia; C.O.71/63, Stewart's memorial to Bathurst, 4 February 1825, filed in Offices And Individuals.

[15]It was unusual for newspapers to change formats during this period and copies of The St. Kitts Gazette and The St. Kitts Advertiser from the period 1837 to 1839 were printed in the broadsheet style.

style. Early copies of The Watchman followed this format; smaller in size than the broadsheet papers but with eight three-columned pages, all of which were numbered. This gave the paper the appearance of a pamphlet rather than a newspaper. The Grenada Chronicle made the opposite change from broadsheet to newsbook sometime in the early 1830's, so that by 1834 both Grenadan papers followed this format, as did The St. Vincent Advertiser; all three of these papers numbered their pages on from the previous week's issue. The Royal Gazette of Jamaica was an expanded version of the newsbook style. The issue for 10 July to 17 July 1824 consisted of an eight page booklet, followed by an eight page Supplement, an eight page Postscript, and a seven page Additional Postscript.

The broadsheet papers generally followed standardised layouts. The first page was mostly taken up with advertisements for everything pertaining to the colony's economic life: runaway slaves, tide times, departing vessels, cargoes, various imported goods, Government announcements, commodity prices, occasional cultural events and so forth. The press was important to the smooth functioning of a colony's economy. Newspapers ensured that the flow of commercial information was constant and widespread. In this respect, a colonial printer in the urban centre of a colony was well-placed to take advantage of the demand for commercial news. The second page was usually taken up by any combination of letters, Parliamentary reports taken from the British press, articles from other colonial papers, and the editorial columns, which doubled as a source of domestic news and discussion. The third page contained more news gleaned from a wide variety of other sources, and the fourth page was given over to more advertisements. The plagiarised element of the colonial press was therefore pronounced. The basic layout of the newsbooks was fairly similar, with

economic news placed at the beginning and end of each issue, and the miscellaneous material occupying the middle pages. Occasionally, in the event of the in-coming mail packet being late or some unusual incident occurring in the island a supplement would be rushed into print. Although changes were made to the size of certain newspapers, apart from The Watchman which became a broadsheet in July 1832, and The Grenada Chronicle no paper has been found to have radically altered its format in this period.[16]

There were no rigid rules for the way in which the basic layout was filled. For example, in colonies where there was more than one newspaper, usually only one had the lucrative right to print business for the executive or the minutes of the Assembly. In the 1820's in Barbados, The Globe held this privilege. However, its rival The Barbadian made a point of copying this information. Other variables included the availability or otherwise of foreign news, a lull in the number of advertisers, and a lack of domestic happenings. All of this meant that the layout of the paper would be changed in an attempt to overcome the shortage of material. Editors were often quite open about the problems they faced in filling their papers. A late arrival of the mail packet sometimes resulted in a short note in the editorial column apologising for, and explaining, the lack of news. In the event of this happening, the editor would look through back copies of his store of magazines, periodicals, letters, and newspapers searching for suitable material to fill the edition. In this respect, the colonial editor was in a worse position than his counterpart working in the provincial press in Britain simply because communications were so slow between Britain and the colonies.

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[16]On 3 April 1825, The Barbadian increased its size from three to four columns of print. In contrast, at some point in 1833, The Colonial Observer reduced its size from broadsheet to tabloid.

British provincial editors who usually needed their paper ready for market day were often pressed for time over the selections they made from the London press. When the mail was late it was generally a matter of hours or at most days.[17] Sometimes, colonial editors were in the opposite situation in that they had too much time on their hands. Delays in the arrival of news could last weeks not days, and the ever-present problem of how to fill the paper was therefore exacerbated.

By the 1820's West Indian newspapers closely mirrored many structural and cultural facets of the British press. However, with respect to the editorial column there had been a noticeable time lag of about thirty years between press development in Britain and the West Indies. Through a headlined and well-placed editorial column a newspaper could voice its opinions on various subjects and develop and present a coherent political view of the world. Indirect political comment through news selection, and more direct comment through political essays and various satirical pieces had always been a feature of the London press, but there was no uniform point at which this fragmented political content changed into an editorial column proper.[18] With certain exceptions, before 1760 the British provincial press had been largely neutral politically; political journalism seems to have spread in response to the letters of Junius and the activities of John Wilkes.[19]As a widespread and fairly standardised feature in most London and some provincial newspapers, the editorial column seems

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[17]Cranfield, Development of The Provincial Newspaper, pp. 33-39.

[18]See G.A. Cranfield, The Press And Society; From Caxton to Northcliffe, London 1978. Jeremy Black, The English Press in The Eighteenth Century, Philadelphia 1987, p.28, notes that there has been no study of editing in this period which could pinpoint the time when an editorial column as a distinct feature governed by certain conventions emerged.

[19]R.M. Wiles, Freshest Advices; Early Provincial Newspapers in England, Ohio 1965, p.292.

to have matured by the 1790's.[20] In contrast, by 1820 political editorials were still unknown in many West Indian newspapers. There were editorial columns in some papers in the very basic sense that editors casually remarked upon the news which had come into their possession. However, such columns were often concerned with politically innocuous news; they lacked the partisan stance and sustained coherence which came to mark political comment in the 1820's. Some newspapers printed in the period between 1800 and 1815 which have been briefly looked at, such as The Tobago Chronicle, The Essequebo [sic] And Demerary Gazette, and its rival The Essequebo [sic] And Demerary Royal Gazette, published nothing at all which could be described as an editorial column. The precise date of the appearance of editorial columns in the West Indian press is unclear, but by January 1819 an editorial was a regular feature in The Guiana Chronicle. In June 1819, The Chronicle commented:

> With the exception of Jamaica, we do not know, that any very great or striking instances of an independent press in the trans-Atlantic possessions of Great Britain are to be recorded. Even in Barbados - the eldest of her settlements, that bulwark of liberty seems to have been long subjugated and prostrate.[21]

A later report in the same paper accredited The Barbados Globe, founded sometime around October 1818, as the first Barbadian newspaper to contain the 'essence of a free press.'[22] The editor of The Guiana Chronicle was obviously unaware of the political material which had crept into the press in other colonies at a much earlier date. For example, political tension between the Governor of St. Vincent and the

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[20]Black, English Press in The Eighteenth Century, p.281; Donald Read, Press And People 1780-1850: Opinion in Three English Cities, London 1961, pp.68-72.

[21]The Guiana Chronicle, 7 June 1819.

[22]Ibid. 25 June 1819.

Assembly in the 1770's had led to a period when political material appeared in the local paper.[23] The same, limited politicisation happened to the Dominican press in the early 1790's.[24] However, it is probable that the political sentiments of these early St. Vincent and Dominican papers were conveyed in a manner that was different to the editorial conventions which emerged in the 1820's. The editor of The Guiana Chronicle also seems to have overlooked The Trinidad Courant of 1810. Events in the colony at that time prove that The Courant did have a political dimension, but the few extant copies show that its editorial columns were not quite comparable to those which developed in virtually all colonial papers in the 1820's. The spread of politically self-confident and campaigning editorials through the colonial press was not an even process. Until the mid-1820's The Barbados Mercury did not print an editorial column, and during the same period newspapers such as The Dominica Chronicle, The Weekly Register, and The Port of Spain Gazette were marked by editorial timidity. However, by the 1830's the editorial column was an established feature of all the West Indian papers that I have looked at.

Information on the distribution of the press is scarce, but there appear to have been a number of methods of getting papers to subscribers or casual readers. Presumably, distribution was not a logistical problem on the smaller islands. For the towns there is some evidence that an informal collection system prevailed. To facilitate this newspapers must have been stocked at convenient collection points, probably the paper's office and various stores in the towns. In 1834, Abel Clinckett

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[23]Selwyn Carrington, 'Eighteenth Century Political Conflict in the British Empire: A Case Study of St. Vincent, 1775-1779,' The Journal of Caribbean History 20, 2, 1985-1986, p.151.

[24]Brown, 'Governorship of John Orde,' pp.168-169.

of The Barbadian printed a request for his subscribers not to send their servants to collect the paper from the office on a Sunday.[25] The proprietor of The Antigua Free Press, Robert Priest, had an arrangement with William Brooks, a storekeeper who stocked the paper for subscribers to collect.[26]

Despite the lack of logistical problems there are signs that the distribution of newspapers caused financial difficulties. In December 1832, Alexander McCombie of The Grenada Free Press, and William Baker of The Grenada Chronicle, issued a joint statement informing subscribers in the parishes of St. Andrew and St. Patrick that subscriptions had to be increased from $8 to $10 to cover transport costs. McCombie and Baker claimed that this step needed the cooperation of two-thirds of the subscribers in these parishes, otherwise neither paper would be forwarded.[27] The St. Vincent Advertiser also charged an increased rate of subscription for delivery outside Kingstown, £4 instead of £3 5s. In October 1829, Robert Priest experienced some difficulties over the distribution of his paper. Priest issued a warning to people who were sending for The Antigua Free Press under the assumed names of rural subscribers in order to avoid paying the subscription fee. Priest also had trouble with the paper boy he employed to deliver copies to town subscribers. He published a warning to non-subscribers not to buy the paper from the boy, Frederick, who was apparently being encouraged to sell copies at a reduced price.[28] In 1822, as a safeguard against

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[25]The Barbadian, 26 February 1834.

[26]The Antigua Free Press, 18 September 1829.

[27]The Grenada Free Press, 5 December 1832.

[28]The Antigua Free Press, 2 and 9 October 1829.

this sort of practice, Abel Clinckett issued namecards to each of his subscribers. The Barbadian would only be delivered to people holding a card.[29]

The geography of the largest colonies ensured that editors were faced with difficult problems in distributing their papers to distant parts of these colonies. Some of these problems were inevitably passed on to the reader in the form of higher subscriptions. For example, it was possible to receive The Royal Gazette of Jamaica by post, but this increased the annual subscription from £4 to £5, a fact which obviously increased the financial strain on Jamaican proprietors. Some proprietors used agents to minimise distribution difficulties, but this was not always successful. In early 1829, the agent employed by The Barbados Globe And Demerara Advocate to supervise the paper's distribution in Demerara, appears to have absconded with subscription monies.[30] However, in general the use of agents must have lightened an editor's workload. In 1816, William Baker of the Georgetown-based Demerary And Essequebo [sic] Royal Gazette announced that one Walter Scott had agreed to supervise the distribution and collection of subscriptions in Berbice.[31] Alexander Stevenson, proprietor of The Guiana Chronicle also had an agent at New Amsterdam in Berbice to deal with subscriptions and deliveries.[32] It is unknown if either of these agents were salaried employees. The proprietor of The Trinidad Guardian employed three people to deliver the paper, although it is not clear if their duties were restricted to Port of Spain. In September 1831, all three deliverymen fell ill causing the paper

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[29]The Barbadian, 28 December 1822.

[30]The Barbados Globe, 9 April 1829.

[31]The Demerary And Essequebo [sic] Royal Gazette, 6 January 1816.

[32]See The Guiana Chronicle, 26 February 1819. The agent's name was Mr. S. Davson. He was replaced by a Mr. A. Schlaffer in March 1820.

to publish a request that subscribers send to the office for their copies.[33] All of the Trinidadian papers were based in Port of Spain, which immediately created problems for the distribution of papers in the south of the colony. In 1820, The Trinidad Gazette was distributed in the Naparimas through the stores of E. Blanc & Co., storekeepers in San Fernando. A similar arrangement was later followed by The Trinidad Guardian, which used the store of a Mr. Garraway at Point La Brae, and 'The Naparima Dispensary' as distribution points for subscribers in those parts of the island.[34] Presumably it was up to subscribers themselves to pick up copies of the paper from these stores. Communications between the northern and southern parts of the colony improved in this period and this affected the press. By 1832 a steam boat service was plying between Port of Spain and San Fernando. In September 1832, to take advantage of this The Port of Spain Gazette changed its publication days to Tuesdays and Fridays.[35]

Newspapers could be forwarded to private individuals in other colonies by subscription (a greater sum than for the home colony), but distribution also worked partly on a system of interchange which the editors had established themselves. An editor sent files of his papers to his contemporaries in exchange for files of their back copies. The precise extent of this system is unclear - it is unknown if all colonial papers took part - but it is obvious that it was a generalised system, and most editors adhered to it. In 1834, Abel Clinckett at The Barbadian expressed surprise at the existence of The Trinidad Royal Gazette, because the editor had broken with tradition:

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[33]The Trinidad Guardian, 27 September 1831.

[34]Ibid. 13 January 1829, 17 December 1830.

[35]The Port of Spain Gazette, 22 September 1832.

> ... the publisher not having favoured us, according to the usual custom in the colonies - of exchanging papers - with a copy.[36]

It is unlikely that money changed hands as all that was involved was a straight swap. This interchange system ensured the dissemination of news throughout the colonies. For example, it is not unusual to find a report from Demerara reprinted in a Barbadian paper, then reported again in other papers.[37] The interchange system obviously worked, but comments in some papers make it clear that it did not always do so satisfactorily.[38] Overall this system can be compared to that which had existed in mid-eighteenth century Britain, described by John Brewer as:

> ... a press infrastructure, an interlocking, overlapping complex of publications, engaging in frequent and blatant plagiarism, and generating controversy and polemic.[39]

In addition to this infrastructure, editors also made use of private correspondence and the generosity of Captains from incoming vessels who readily gave any newspapers in their possession to local editors.[40]

A detailed understanding of the ownership and employment structure of each paper is hampered by a lack of evidence, and by the ease with which papers changed

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[36]The Barbadian, 30 April 1834.

[37]See The Dominica Chronicle, 7 December 1825. This contained an article from The Barbadian of 29 November, itself based on private correspondence from Demerara dated a week previous.

[38]See The Port of Spain Gazette, 27 April 1831; The Grenada Free Press, 10 October 1832; The Antigua Free Press, 17 April 1834.

[39]Brewer, Party Ideology And Popular Politics, p.16.

[40]See The Grenada Free Press, 21 March 1832; The Barbadian, 21 March 1832.

hands. However, it appears that there were two main types of ownership pattern, and several aberrations from these norms. The main pattern was one where ownership was vested in one person, who also performed various of the editorial, printing, and publishing tasks. There are numerous examples of this: Michael then Mary Ryan at The Barbados Globe; Alexander McCombie at The Grenada Free Press; William Baker at The Grenada Chronicle; William Stewart at The Dominica Chronicle; Abel Clinckett at The Barbadian; William Walker at The Barbados Mercury; Matthew Gallagher and his successor John Holman at The Trinidad Courant; William Lewer at The Trinidad Gazette; John Drape at The St. Vincent Advertiser; Thomas LeGall at The St. Vincent Royal Gazette; and Alexander Stevenson at The Guiana Chronicle.It would seem unlikely that Mary Ryan of The Barbados Globe, the only woman editor of a West Indian newspaper in this period, would have been able to perform the manual labour in her printing office, yet it is certain that she was involved in an editorial capacity.[41] Little information has been found on Mary Ryan, but a good deal has been located on her husband, Michael. Michael Ryan had familial connections with the printing trade, for he was born, probably in North America, the son of John Ryan, an itinerant Loyalist printer. John Ryan published newspapers in New York, Saint John (New Brunswick), and Newfoundland. Michael Ryan also ran newspapers (which were unsuccessful), in Saint John and Fredericton before moving to Newfoundland. He was working with his father in August 1807, but the connection had ended by 1810. In that year Ryan applied to the Governor of Newfoundland, Sir

[41]The involvement of women with the press in the Caribbean dated back to 1722, when Mary Baldwin took over The Weekly Jamaica Courant, Cave, 'Printing Comes to Jamaica,' p.15. An early Dominican paper was called Mrs Browne's Roseau Gazette. Women editors were known elsewhere in the Empire. In Bermuda, three sisters edited a newspaper; these were the Stockdales - Priscilla, Frances, and Sarah, who edited The Bermuda Gazette And Weekly Advertiser, 1803-1816. See Lent, Mass Communications, Chapter 2.

John Duckworth, for permission to start a second St. John's paper to be called The Commercial Advertiser. The request was refused and this apparently caused Michael Ryan to leave Newfoundland and try his luck in the Caribbean.[42] At first Ryan seems to have lived in Antigua, where he edited The Antigua Journal in 1812 and 1813.[43] He left Antigua in 1813, and then made two attempts at working in Barbadian journalism. The first one, probably around 1814, was with The Barbados Times, but a lack of official patronage caused the paper's closure. Ryan left Barbados, but returned in September 1818 and became involved in establishing The Barbados Globe a month later. In April 1830, Ryan announced his departure from Barbados in order to improve his health.[44] He returned to Newfoundland, and then in September 1830, whilst on board *The Louisa* bound for Grenada, Ryan lost his life in a hurricane which wrecked the ship. Mary Ryan waited almost a year before publicly accepting her husband was dead. His obituary revealed that prior to his departure Ryan's declining health had forced his wife to carry out editorial duties on The Globe 'for many years past.'[45] Mary Ryan continued to edit The Globe and remained official printer to the Barbadian Assembly until late 1833, when Andrew Drinan took the paper over. Drinan was another itinerant printer who between January 1832 and May 1833 had worked in Trinidad on The Port of Spain Gazette.

Although Mary Ryan was the only woman who appears to have actually performed editorial duties, she was not the only women connected with the West

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[42]Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Vol. VII, 763-766, entry on John Ryan; printer, newspaperman, office holder, and merchant.

[43]Pactor, British Caribbean Newspapers, p.2.

[44]The Barbados Globe, 5 April 1830.

[45]Ibid. 18 July 1831.

Indian press in this period. Several women inherited printing offices. In February 1832, Thomasina Walker issued an announcement in The Barbadian that she had, as 'sole proprietress of The Barbados Mercury And Bridgetown Gazette', employed a "gentleman" - possibly John Jervis - to edit the paper. This followed a period when publication of the paper had been suspended.[46] Thomasina Walker was probably the wife or daughter of William Walker, who had edited The Mercury between 1811 and 1826.[47] Antigua provides another example of a woman being involved with a newspaper. Between 1815 and 1827, William Hill partnered Henry Loving at The Weekly Register. When Hill died in July 1827, Sarah Hill (probably his wife, but possibly a daughter) entered into partnership with Loving, although it seems certain that she did not work on the paper in the same manner as William Hill had done. The partnership lasted until May 1833.[48] On St. Kitts, Elizabeth Cable appears to have inherited The St. Kitts Advertiser from Samuel Cable in late 1839 and she retained ownership of the paper until the 1870's.

Some of these solo proprietors and editors were involved with their newspapers for virtually the whole of their working lives. For example, John Drape at The St. Vincent Advertiser was working on the paper by at least 1810, and a man of the same name was still involved with it in 1854 when a fire destroyed the printing office.[49]

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[46]The Barbadian, 29 February 1832.

[47]William Walker had been involved with The Barbados Mercury since 1801, when he had been employed by the then owner Isaac Williamson Orderson mainly in a subordinate role in the printing office, although on occasions he edited the paper. Walker had been a printer's apprentice at one of the larger London newspapers. He owned, edited, printed, and published The Barbados Mercury from 1811 until 1826. He died in Barbados on 31 August 1829. See The Barbados Mercury, 22 December 1810; The Barbadian, 1 September 1829.

[48]The Antigua Free Press, 13 June 1833.

[49]The Bahama Herald, 18 January 1854.

Andrew Drinan, who had taken over The Barbados Globe in late 1833, married Mary Ryan on 21 January 1834, and apparently he was still involved with the paper in 1866.[50] Alexander Stevenson was the mainstay of The Guiana Chronicle for twenty-five years between 1814 and 1839. Stevenson was a printer by trade who arrived in Demerara in 1807. He started The Chronicle after being involved with journalism for several years.[51] During the twenty-five years that Stevenson owned The Chronicle it is only certain that he employed three editors. William Towart was Stevenson's editor for an unknown period in the paper's early years. In 1821 the two men quarrelled and Towart left to establish his own paper, The Colonist.[52] In mid-1825, Matthew Barker was specially recruited as editor from England, but his tenure lasted only a few months. Barker was a central figure in the events surrounding the suppression of The Chronicle in November 1825. After failing to get a resident's ticket to stay in Demerara Barker left the colony shortly after in February 1826.[53] The third editor known to have been employed by Stevenson was John Emery. He worked for Stevenson from around October 1838 until a year later when the new

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[50]The Barbadian, 22 January 1834. Pactor, British Caribbean Newspapers, p.19.

[51]C.O.111/127, Stevenson's petition to Acting Governor Smith, 30 May 1833, enclosed with no. 8. There is one secondary source which indicates that Stevenson may have run The Guiana Chronicle with a brother. David Dobson, Directory of Scottish Settlers in North America, 1625-1825, Baltimore 1984-1986, Vol. III, 169, lists a John Stevenson, born in Melrose Roxburghshire, as being proprietor of The Guiana Chronicle until he drowned in the Orinoco river on 25 August 1823.

[52]C.O.111/55, Charles Herbert (Demeraran First Fiscal) to D'Urban, 8 September 1826, enclosed with D'Urban to Bathurst, 7 September 1826, private.

[53]For accounts of Barker's case see, C.O.111/56, D'Urban to Bathurst, 16 September 1826, no. 39; D'Urban to Wilmot-Horton, 19 September 1826, private. This suppression of The Guiana Chronicle is discussed below pp.275-277.

owners of the paper dispensed with his services.[54] Between these periods Alexander Stevenson probably performed the editorial duties himself.

There were other notable examples of a proprietor delegating the editorship of the paper. John Irwin of The Trinidad Guardian employed John Shoel as editor from the paper's start in October 1825. Shoel eventually acquired a controlling interest in The Guardian in June 1827.[55] Two years later the paper advertised for a French editor to supervise the French section of the paper, but it is unknown if anyone was recruited.[56] John Wooding owned The Barbados Mercury from around September 1826 until September 1831, and employed John Jervis as editor for an unknown period around 1830 to September 1831.[57]

The other major ownership type was based on partnership. There are several examples of this type. The Port of Spain Gazette went through several changes of ownership within the first few years of its existence, although the precise structure of the business during this initial period is unclear. It is not known, for example, whether the various early partnerships which owned the paper employed an editor. However, during the paper's most intensely political phase between early 1832 and mid-1833, the structure of The Gazette is known. At that time the paper was jointly owned, printed, and published by Henry Mills and William Stewart. Probably from around

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[54]The Guiana Chronicle, 9 October 1839.

[55]See The Trinidad Guardian, 1 June 1827, 11 November 1831.

[56]Ibid. 30 June 1829.

[57]This has been pieced together from various sources: The Barbadian, 18, 22 February 1832; C.O.31/51, Journal of The Assembly of Barbados, 1826-1834.

January 1832 Mills and Stewart employed Andrew Drinan as editor.[58] There had been a fairly rapid turnover of partnerships which had owned The Gazette since the paper's inception in September 1825. The Port of Spain Gazette was founded using the equipment and title of The Trinidad Gazette. John Holman & Co. had acquired the 'whole right, title, and interest' to this paper. A secondary source notes that William Lewer sold the actual printing press to John Irwin who used it to print The Trinidad Guardian - launched a month after The Port of Spain Gazette.[59] However, the prospectus of The Port of Spain Gazette specifically mentions that its printing equipment was from The Trinidad Gazette.[60] John Holman had learnt the printing trade in Trinidad as an apprentice to Matthew Gallagher, proprietor and editor of an earlier paper called The Trinidad Courant.[61] In May 1821, Holman had relaunched Gallagher's paper as The Trinidad Courant And Commercial Advertiser. The Trinidad Gazette referred to The Advertiser in mid-August 1822, but it seems to have closed sometime in 1823.[62] The Holman & Co. partnership published The Port of Spain Gazette for four years, and then the paper announced that Holman had moved into partnership with William Belk. This proved a short-lived arrangement which may have ended in some acrimony. On 7 November 1829, an advertisement in The Gazette announced the end of the partnership, and this was followed a week later by another advertisement claiming the first one had been published in The Trinidad Guardian

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[58]C.O.295/93, Sir Lewis Grant (Governor of Trinidad, 1829 to 1833), to Viscount Howick (Under Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, November 1830 to April 1833), 27 July 1832, private.

[59]Cave, 'First Trinidad Guardian,' p.62.

[60]The Port of Spain Gazette, 21 September 1825.

[61]The Trinidad Gazette, 31 March 1821.

[62]Pactor, British Caribbean Newspapers, p.109.

without Holman's consent. At this point, with Belk apparently the sole owner, The Gazette almost closed. On 14 November The Gazette advertised the sale of the office press, types, and materials, and contained a short note mentioning 'circumstances of a peculiar nature' which were forcing the paper to close. This proved to be a temporary setback because on 21 November The Port of Spain Gazette reappeared with John Holman again as joint proprietor, this time with Henry Mills as his partner. Mills retained his stake in The Gazette until his death on 2 May 1870.

Mills was born in 1804 in Thetford, Norfolk, and was apprenticed as a bookbinder to Charles Lloyd, who was later employed by Sir Ralph Woodford as Government printer in Trinidad. Mills's term of indenture with Lloyd only lasted nineteen months because Lloyd's business failed. Mills completed his apprenticeship with a relative, and in the mid-1820's received an invitation from Lloyd to travel to Trinidad where Lloyd claimed that he could procure Mills a place in the Government printing office. Mills arrived sometime in 1825, but no such place was available. To earn a living he opened a bookbinding business in May 1826, apparently under the patronage of the colonial Government Secretary, Philip Souper. The success of this venture is unknown, and Mills eventually ended up as a partner with John Holman. Mills had been married in Europe with a family, and he also had a wife and child in Trinidad.[63] Holman and Mills remained in partnership until May 1832. Around that time Holman withdrew from the paper, and may have gone to St. Lucia to conduct Government printing in that colony.[64] On 30 May, Mills entered into a new partner-

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[63]This biographical information was gleaned from two sources: a letter from Mills to Charles Lloyd published in The Port of Spain Gazette, 5 May 1830, and Mills's obituary in the paper, 4 May 1870.

[64]C.O.258/28, St. Lucia Blue Book, 1832, lists a J. Holman as having taken up the post of Government printer on 7 April 1832.

ship with William Stewart, formerly owner and editor of The Dominica Chronicle. The Mills-Stewart partnership was subject to severe strains because of political tensions in Trinidad. The partnership did not survive these tensions and ended on 1 January 1834. It is unknown if Mills engaged any other partners in the paper from that point until 1864, when a T. F. Stuart was employed as editor.[65]

Another example of a printing partnership is that of Henry Loving and William Hill. They were partners in The Weekly Register of Antigua for twelve years. Hill may have supervised the printing of the paper because he was a trained printer. Hill was an Antiguan creole born in 1791. At the age of twelve he was bound as an apprentice for seven years to William Collins, the owner of The Antigua Gazette. Around 1810, Hill became a bookkeeper to a St. John's merchant, but after a few years the merchant retired to England. In 1815, Henry Loving offered Hill a share in The Weekly Register, which he accepted.[66] Editorial duties on The Weekly Register also fell to Hill, and it would therefore appear that despite founding the paper, Loving had very little input to The Register until after Hill's death. Loving's partnership then continued with Sarah Hill. Edward Jordon and Robert Osborn of The Watchman formed another partnership of this type. Osborn was trained as a printer and was responsible for this aspect of the business, but both men made editorial decisions.[67] Thomasina Walker had acquired control of The Barbados Mercury in February 1832, and it appears that by January 1833 she was in a partnership of some kind with Samuel Hyde. This did not last long, as by March of that year Hyde was making

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[65]Donald Wood, Trinidad in Transition: The Years After Slavery, London 1968, p.82.

[66]The Weekly Register, 17 July 1827.

[67]Heuman, Between Black And White, p.59.

moves to establish his own paper. He achieved this in November, as printer and publisher of The West Indian. Other partnerships existed in Dominica and St. Vincent. John Finlay and Edward Dowdy were the men behind The Dominica Colonist. It appears Finlay undertook printing and publishing duties, while Dowdy edited the paper. In 1810, The St. Vincent Advertiser was being run as a partnership by John Drape and James Adams,[68] while a later St. Vincent paper - The St. Vincent Chronicle set up in early 1835 - was also owned by a partnership of William Mitchell and another man called Adams.

There were several seemingly anomalous forms of newspaper ownership. James Scotland Snr. at The Antigua Free Press, and Young Anderson at The Colonial Observer And Trinidad Gazette, owned and edited their newspapers, but neither appears to have had printing and publishing responsibilities for them. Under Scotland virtually every edition The Free Press had a small advertisement on the back page stating that the paper was printed and published for him, not by him. Surviving editions of The Colonial Observer show that in January 1833 the paper was printed and published by E. Miller, who had been replaced by August 1833 by J. Lewis - both men were obviously private printers. This situation raises questions about how these papers were produced. Some type of dummy issue for each edition must have been drawn up and then sent to the printer's office to be set in type and printed. Scotland and Anderson must have had to pay more to get each edition printed than if they had done the job themselves. In October 1833 The Free Press increased charges for

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[68]C.O.260/49, see enclosures with Sir George Hill (Governor of St. Vincent, 1831 to 1833; Governor of Trinidad, 1833 to 1839), to Goderich, 21 September 1832, no. 32.

advertisements because one of the printing offices had raised its costs.[69] When Young Anderson launched The Observer in August 1832, he was given the contract to print Government business, which appears a strange decision given that he did not perform the printing himself. In Scotland's case production of The Free Press was also on a rather curious basis, as under Robert Priest the paper had been a self-contained printing establishment. The overall circumstances of both papers were probably a result of their political stance. Anderson and Scotland were both white creoles who owned newspapers committed to the abolition of slavery. This will be examined in detail in Chapter Three, but some of the potential problems caused by this political stance were noted by a contemporary commentator:

> No journal advocating the cause of humanity can continue long; all advertisements are withheld from it - the merchants, or storekeepers, will not at any price, supply paper - they will combine together on hearing that a vessel has arrived with some, and purchase up the whole; by which the editor is repeatedly forced either to put off his publication altogether, or send it forth on the coarsest description of material.[70]

Pressures of this kind may possibly have resulted in Scotland and Anderson transferring printing responsibilities into private hands. However, politically-inspired pressures may then have been brought to bear on the printers who produced The Free Press and The Observer. The increased charges for advertisements, which had been passed onto The Free Press by its printers, were announced in October 1833 - by

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[69]The Antigua Free Press, 31 October 1833.

[70]Captain Studholme Hodgson, Truths From The West Indies: Including a Sketch of Maderia in 1833, London 1838, pp.196-197.

which time the paper had been embroiled in political controversy for some three years. Political pressures may also account for Young Anderson's change of printers at some point during 1833.

Official Government Gazettes which operated in a semi-independent fashion appear to represent a further form of ownership. The two examples found of this are The Royal Gazette in Trinidad and The St. Lucia Gazette And Public Advertiser. The men who were in charge of these papers - Young Anderson and George Busteed - were not proprietors: yet they seem to have exercised de facto control over these papers. This inevitably generated conflicts of interest between public duties as Government employees and the printing of private political views. This tension caused so many problems that The Royal Gazette and The St. Lucia Gazette were suppressed: the former by the local executive, and the latter by order of the Secretary of State.[71]

Perhaps the most unusual form of ownership which has been found is the one which underpinned The Antigua Herald And Gazette. Although The Herald had been planned for a considerable time before January 1832, its organisation was not finalised until that point.[72] The Herald was set in operation primarily thanks to a subscription fund, which by September 1831 had been signed by sixty people at £10 each.[73] Presumably, this £600 (the final figure was probably more) was used to purchase the various materials needed to produce the paper and to pay the editor, Thomas Warner. In effect, the people who had subscribed to the paper were shareholders in the

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[71]These incidents are examined below pp.133-134; 285-291; 300-302.

[72]The idea seems to have been in circulation by July 1829. See a report in The Antigua Free Press, 17 July 1829.

[73]Robson Lowe (ed.), The Codrington Correspondence, London 1951, p.71. Lowe quotes fragments from the letters of Robert Jarritt, Attorney on several Codrington estates. Jarritt to Codrington, 5 September 1831. The collection is currently unavailable.

concern. There was no financial dividend to be gained on these shares, but it could be argued that there was an intangible political dividend to be drawn on the investment. This took the form of repeated attacks by The Herald on the other Antiguan papers (especially The Free Press), and the satisfaction of having a newspaper which, arguably, was in tune with the majority view of the white population. At least some subscribers attempted to exercise their control over The Herald in August 1833 when a meeting was called to remove Warner as editor. This was because Warner had strayed too far from the paper's original political purpose. The move failed and Warner survived as editor.[74]

Evidently, most colonial newspapers were small businesses owned by one or two men who took an active part in the day to day activities of running the paper. Many establishments also undertook general printing work, and sold stationary and blank forms needed in the running of businesses and plantations. Alexander Stevenson owned two printing presses, one for The Guiana Chronicle and one for job printing.[75] Other owners who undertook general printing were the Ryans, Abel Clinckett, Loving and Hill, Alexander McCombie, William Stewart, John Drape, Thomas LeGall, Henry Mills, and Andrew Drinan. There is also evidence that proprietors were engaged in other work. In 1826, John Irwin, proprietor of The Trinidad Guardian was the manager of a reading room in Port of Spain.[76] John Holman and Henry Mills also incorporated a circulating library into their business. The opening of this library was

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[74]The Antigua Free Press, 8 August 1833.

[75]C.O.111/50, Statement of J. McGusty, 18 November 1825, concerning the suppression of The Guiana Chronicle, included with D'Urban to Bathurst, 28 November 1825, private. Also, C.O.111/56, Statement of R. Padmore to Herbert, 9 September 1826, enclosed with D'Urban to Bathurst, 16 September 1826, no. 39.

[76]The Trinidad Guardian, 3 October 1826.

announced in December 1829 and it opened on 1 January 1830. A subscription to the library was £5 per annum.[77] It is probable that these subsidiary activities did not distract from the newspaper as the focal point of the business because of the time and effort it took to produce each edition.

No colonial newspapers employed reporters at this time, probably because it was too expensive to do so.[78] Editors such as Samuel Hyde of The West Indian overcame this problem by performing the reporting tasks themselves.[79] Alternatively, notes from Court cases and other important incidents were made and sent to the press by people who happened to be in attendance; it is unknown if these people were paid for their contributions. Paid reporters for the West Indian press started to appear at the end of the 1830's. In April 1839, Samuel Prescod of The Liberal advertised throughout the colonies for two or three reporters to work on his paper.[80] A few scattered pieces of information have been found on the employment of the tradesmen who produced and distributed newspapers, but not enough to generalise with any confidence about the entire colonial press. The number of compositors who were employed must have reflected to some extent the frequency of publication. In 1825, The Guiana Chronicle was printed three times a week and Alexander Stevenson found it necessary to employ Matthew Barker as editor; a man called David Mitchell, who was possibly the foreman; and seven apprentice compositors. In addition, Stevenson had his brother

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[77]The Port of Spain Gazette, 5 December 1829.

[78]The Antigua Free Press, 16 January 1834.

[79]The Barbadian, 6 November 1833.

[80]The Grenada Chronicle, 6 April 1839; The Palladium And St. Lucia Free Press, 13 April 1839.

Robert as Chief Clerk, and the paper's agent at New Amsterdam.[81] In contrast the bi-weekly Trinidad Guardian, in November 1829, employed three compositors and a 'pressman' - a vague term which presumably meant a general printing office worker.[82] In October 1831, as The Guardian was heading towards closure, it printed an appeal which stated that it had twelve staff in total to pay, although this may simply have been a spur to the paper's debtors.[83] The weekly Free Press in Antigua employed three compositors, which seems to have been barely sufficient as Robert Priest admitted he would have liked more hands to lighten the workload.[84] In November 1824, the Dominican Assembly was investigating the conduct of The Dominica Chronicle. From the evidence given by Charles Mathers - who had been employed as compositor on the paper for seven years before leaving the colony to work in St. Thomas - it would appear that he was the only compositor working for William Stewart, but this seems unlikely.[85] Other newspapers occasionally ran advertisements for one or two compositors, and from this insubstantial body of evidence, it must be assumed that colonial proprietors generally employed between three and twelve compositors. Perhaps the most interesting piece of information on

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[81]C.O.111/50, Stevenson's memorial to Bathurst, 21 November 1825, enclosed with D'Urban to Bathurst, 28 November 1825, private. The number of men employed on The Chronicle compares with The Antigua Observer a quarter of a century later. This paper had an editor, a foreman, four journeymen, and five occasional workmen. See Cave, 'Early Printing,' p.175.

[82]The Trinidad Guardian, 13 November 1829.

[83]Ibid. 11 October 1831. The Guardian closed on 25 November 1831.

[84]The Antigua Free Press, 27 March 1829.

[85]The Dominica Chronicle, 2 March 1825.

this subject is the £260 wage bill for the unknown number of compositors who worked on The Barbadian in 1833.[86]

It seems certain that slaves had been used in earlier times for manual labour in printing offices, but by the 1820's it is unclear to what extent the practice persisted. In one case we do know that a newspaper proprietor used some of his slaves as compositors. This was William Collins of The Antigua Gazette, who by 1819 had trained three slaves as compositors. Tom, Charles, and Cato may have been Collins's sons, and three other young slaves were at that point also being trained in the profession.[87] When William Stewart advertised the sale of The Dominica Chronicle in June 1827, six young slaves could also be had as part of a package which included Stewart's printing office, equipment, his house and lot in Roseau.[88] However, it is not clear if these slaves were specifically attached to the printing office, or were ordinary domestics. Slaves had probably performed the manual work in printing establishments in earlier times because of a lack of free labourers willing to do such work, and slaves were definitely used to deliver papers on Jamaica during the formative stages of the printing industry.[89] In 1808, James Adams of The St. Vincent Advertiser complained that people were giving rum 'to the negroes attached to the printing office.'[90] Of particular concern to Adams was a lad called George who bartered copies of the paper for grog, and often returned to the office insensible with drink.

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[86]The Barbadian, 13 November 1833.

[87]Roderick Cave, 'The Use of Slave Labour in West Indian Printing Houses,' Library 5th ser., 30, 3, 1975, pp.241-243.

[88]The Dominica Chronicle, 6 June 1827.

[89]Cave, 'Printing Comes to Jamaica,' p.15.

[90]The Royal St. Vincent Gazette And General Advertiser, 2 July 1808.

Twenty years on from this date changes in the structure of the colonial workforce - particularly the increase of free coloureds - may have obviated much of the necessity for using slaves. An advertisement in The Trinidad Guardian in February 1831 indicates that for that paper at least white free labour was preferred. The paper wanted:

> A steady white married man, perfectly master of his trade, who has a son of sufficient age to be bound apprentice to the business.[91]

However, on a general level it is unclear if white or free coloured labour was preferred. It could plausibly be argued that the politically and racially aware free coloured proprietors of The Watchman, The Weekly Register, and The St. Kitts Advertiser would have employed free coloured compositors out of a sense of racial loyalty, but no evidence has been found to prove this. It is known that at least two newspaper proprietors - William Stewart and Abel Clinckett - owned significant numbers of slaves, but this does not mean they were used in the offices of The Dominica Chronicle and The Barbadian.[92] In Stewart's case, they were employed on his coffee plantation.

There is a very limited amount of precise information on the profitability of colonial newspapers. As with the British press it seems that the main sources of revenue were from advertisements and other printing work. Subscription monies and profits from any casual purchases were of secondary importance to these sources. In December 1831, the Jamaican Assembly's Committee of Accounts proposed that all

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[91]The Trinidad Guardian, 22 February 1831.

[92]See C.O.71/59, Huntingdon to Bathurst, 11 October 1822, no. 17. This included a report comparing the wealth of whites and free coloureds. Stewart was listed as owning 36 slaves. For Clinckett, see The Barbadian, 30 January 1833.

advertisements required by law to be published in the colony's press should be done so free of charge. Alexander Holmes of The Cornwall Chronicle, and Alexander Wells Aikman of The Royal Gazette, petitioned the Assembly that this recommendation should be ignored. Holmes claimed:

> ... the increased circulation of a newspaper published in this island does not repay the editor in any other respect than virtually by the increase of his advertisements...[93]

This view was repeated five years later when three proprietors petitioned the Assembly, claiming that they were owed money for printing work from the Mulgrave and Sligo administrations. The men claimed that 'advertisements constitute the principal profit of a newspaper establishment.'[94]

In the other colonies where subscriber lists must have been much smaller than in Jamaica, a reliance on advertising revenues placed critical importance on contracts to print work for the various branches of colonial Government. No colonial Government appears to have had an overall contract which covered the printing work necessary for the executive, legislature, and judiciary, although the convention in Trinidad was for the judicial advertisements to be placed with the printer chosen by the executive.[95] Rather, each arm of government seems to have awarded contract work to a favoured printer, and the result was a disorganised spread of public work throughout the private sector. In St. Vincent the situation was hopelessly confused, and

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[93]C.O.140/121, Jamaican votes of the Assembly, 9 December 1831.

[94]C.O.140/128, Jamaican votes of Assembly, 24 November 1836, the joint petition of Thomas Shannon, William Bruce, and James Lunan.

[95]C.O.295/99, Hill to J.G. Shaw Lefevre (Under Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, April 1833 to August 1834), 2 November 1833, no. 58.

a bitter press war dragged on for almost a decade over which of the colony's two newspapers was legally entitled to print its laws.[96] The confusion arose because of the separation of printing for each arm of Government. In February 1818, John Drape of The St. Vincent Advertiser was appointed by the Governor, Sir Charles Brisbane, to print all documents issued from Government House - Acts, Declarations and so forth. Drape had also held the contract to print the minutes of the Assembly over a number of years, although on one occasion in 1810 it had been withdrawn. In February 1826, Brisbane revoked Drape's commission and appointed Thomas LeGall. However, the Assembly continued to entrust the printing of its minutes to Drape, who maintained his claim to the printing of all official work, including that of the executive. Basing his judgement on the fact that Drape's commission had been cancelled in 1826, Brisbane's replacement - Sir George Hill - refused to supply Drape with copies of the colony's laws, prompting Drape to send a memorial to the Secretary of State. Drape ignored the rebuff which he received from the Colonial Office and printed and sold copies of the colony's laws.[97] Eventually Drape was taken to court by Thomas LeGall who sought an injunction against him. This case was one of considerable complexity, but it found its way into the St. Vincent press where it was discussed with predictable intensity. The whole affair concluded with the Lt. Governor of the colony, George Tyler, cancelling LeGall's commission as executive printer on 16 February 1835.[98] LeGall's offer to perform printing work for the executive free

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[96]The documents relative to this are in C.O.260/49, Hill to Goderich, 21 September 1832, no. 32.

[97]C.O.261/15, Goderich to Hill, 15 November 1832, no. 52.

[98]The St. Vincent Royal Gazette, 12, 19 February 1835.

of charge was ignored, and the commission passed to the proprietors of The St. Vincent Chronicle.[99]

A situation of this complexity was obviously unsatisfactory. However, the performance of public printing duties by private newspaper owners was probably forced on the colonial Governments by the necessity of circulating information as widely as possible. There seems no question that the colonists were avid readers of newspapers, and this was the most obvious way of achieving maximum publicity for important announcements. As far back as the 1780's, evidence from Dominica shows that printing contracts of whatever sort had important political dimensions with clear implications for the control of the press.[100] With a rising level of political confidence in the press in the 1820's this situation became exacerbated. For the moment however, the important aspect of these contracts is their monetary worth. There were two types of contract. Firstly, there were contracts whereby the printer performed any amount of printing work for a fixed sum of money. This system was in operation in Antigua, Dominica, Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and Trinidad. The value of the contract varied somewhat from colony to colony. For example, in 1832 the contract to print the minutes of the St. Vincent Assembly was set at £200 per annum, which was only half that paid to the Grenadan printer.[101] The value of the contract did not remain static; the tendency was for it to depreciate. For Antigua, there is a detailed source for the Assembly's contract which shows how it depreciated by 42% between 1805 and

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[99]The political aspect of this situation is examined below, pp.242-244.

[100]Brown, 'Governorship of John Orde,' pp.168-169.

[101]The St. Vincent Royal Gazette, 13 September 1832.

1816.[102] In 1805, the contract was held by William Collins, editor of The Antigua Gazette, who was paid £330 to print all Government business. By 1812, the contract had passed to Michael Ryan of The Antigua Journal, but it had been reduced to £250. Ryan left Antigua in 1813 and a newly-negotiated contract of £200 was awarded to his successor at The Journal, Thomas Harris. In 1816, the contract was put out for private tender, and Henry Loving and William Hill submitted a successful bid for a three year contract at £190 per annum. Loving and Hill held this contract on a triennial basis until November 1828, when political pressures ensured that it was not renewed. Antiguan Government printing does not seem to have been on a secure footing from that point until January 1832, when The Antigua Herald appeared. The Herald contrived to make its proposed first total printing bill for the year 1832 amount to £500 - a sum which caused The Antigua Free Press to demand an explanation for the £310 discrepancy between Loving's last account and The Herald's proposed bill.[103]

Until a politically-inspired decision withdrew the Dominican contract in January 1825, The Dominica Chronicle had derived £300 payment for printing work for the Legislature.[104] As in the case of Antigua, the Dominican contract steeply declined in value over the years. After William Stewart lost the contract it was cut to £120 per annum, and by the time he regained the contract again in September 1840, it was worth only £40 per annum.[105] The critical importance of these contracts for

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[102]The Weekly Register, 14 July 1829.

[103]The Antigua Free Press, 15 March 1832.

[104]The Dominica Chronicle, 7 September 1825.

[105]C.O.76/20, 31, Dominica Blue Books, 1830 and 1841.

small-scale papers such as The Dominica Chronicle is shown by the fact that the paper was unable to continue without it. From January 1825 The Chronicle was in competition with The Dominica Reporter, a rival paper established by members of the Assembly. After a period of declining sales and profitability, The Chronicle reached the point where it ceased to be a worthwhile investment and its closure was announced on 6 June 1827. In his last editorial, William Stewart noted:

> In a colony so small as this, with so limited a population, it must be evident to all that, under present circumstances, the concern of a newspaper has ceased to be a source of profit.[106]

Despite advertising the sale of his printing office in Trinidad and Antigua, Stewart appears to have failed to find a buyer.[107] This possibly indicates that in some of the smaller colonies printers may have been reluctant to enter into competition with an established newspaper.

The critical importance of the printing contract was also apparent in Grenada. Alexander McCombie established The Grenada Free Press in 1826 in response to the Grenadan Assembly's public encouragement of such an endeavour. This encouragement was given despite the fact that The Grenada Chronicle had been published under various titles since around 1789.[108] On 22 April 1825, the Assembly made its views on the establishment of a newspaper clear, but it took McCombie over a year to

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[106]The Dominica Chronicle, 7 June 1829.

[107]See The Trinidad Guardian, 13 March 1829; The Weekly Register, 3 March 1829.

[108]Pactor, British Caribbean Newspapers, p.49. The editor of The Chronicle for many years was John Spahn, whose ethnic origins are unknown. Spahn died in December 1826, and ownership of the paper passed to William Baker. The Grenadan Assembly seems to have reacted negatively to Baker as a free coloured, and the possibility exists that this also lay behind their refusal to grant Spahn the contract.

organise production. A contract was drawn up on 14 December 1826, which placed exclusive printing rights in McCombie's hands for the three years from 1 January 1827 at £400 per annum.[109] Despite periodic pressure from William Baker of The Grenada Chronicle that the contract be opened to public competition it remained with McCombie. It is possible that Baker's claims were disregarded because he was a free coloured. In June 1832, seven months after praising McCombie's editorial conduct of The Grenada Free Press, the Assembly appointed a committee to advertise for tenders for the public printing.[110] McCombie petitioned the Assembly to retain his monopoly, an aim which he appears to have achieved. McCombie's statement claimed:

> ... the depression of the times and decline of business, renders the printing trade inadequate to the expense incurred in carrying it on, without the support of your Honorable House and the continuance to your petitioner of the Public work, and that in consequence, if that work be withdrawn he must give up the business in this colony.[111]

This was further proof that the connection between the financial viability of a newspaper and Government patronage could be critical. However, despite McCombie's claims and the fate of The Dominica Chronicle, other papers suffered the same blow without collapsing totally. The Weekly Register survived the loss, as did The St. Vincent Advertiser which lost the contract in January 1826, and The Barbados Mercury which lost the Barbadian Assembly contract in June 1820. In January and May 1832, The Port of Spain Gazette lost both the executive contract and piece work

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[109]C.O.104/12, Journals of The Grenadan Assembly, 1824-1832, 14 December 1826.

[110]Ibid. 23 June 1832.

[111]Ibid. Alexander McCombie's petition to the Assembly, 30 June 1832.

printing for the judiciary in quick succession; but it was still able to withstand the losses. John Holman had established The Port of Spain Gazette in 1825 with a specific agreement to perform the printing work for the Government at a rate 25% cheaper than William Lewer had formerly done. Piece work printing was offered to the judicial arm of Government at a rate cut by 20%. In 1832, the printing contract for the executive was valued at £170 per annum, which means Lewer must have done the job for about £212. The situation is somewhat confusing however, because Lewer had been an official Government employee.[112]

The second mode of executing printing work was done on a piece work basis. Obviously the more work that was done, the higher the remuneration. This system prevailed in Barbados where one person was appointed official printer to the Assembly - this was not, however, a salaried Government position. Following the removal of this privilege from William Walker for printing politically unacceptable material, Michael Ryan was appointed official printer to the House on 20 June 1820.[113] A brief survey of the Assembly's accounts shows how, despite considerable yearly variations, the piece work system was comparable to the fixed rate method. Between 1820 and 1834, the various owners of The Globe received an average of £205 each year in payment for printing the business of the Assembly.[114] The various other Barbadian printers

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[112]The Port of Spain Gazette, 16 May 1832.

[113]There is some confusion as to when Walker was sacked as printer. C.O.31/49, Journals of the Assembly, 20 June 1820, suggests it was on this date. However, a petition from Michael Ryan of 2 April 1823, claims he had been appointed printer on 30 May 1820. Despite this confusion the reason for Walker losing the privilege is clear. Walker had printed an article flattering to Lord Combermere (Governor of Barbados, 1817 to 1820), when he retired. The Assembly had been in conflict with Combermere, and withdrew Walker's privilege as a punishment.

[114]C.O.31/49, 51, Journals of the Assembly, 1819-1834. The figures for 1825-1833 are full and accurate, the rest only partially so.

also received modest payments for doing occasional printing work for the Assembly. In 1827, for example, Abel Clinckett was paid £52, and in 1829, John Wooding then owner of The Mercury received £42. This situation of the Assembly having a favoured printer, but also making payments for piece work to other printers was also followed in Jamaica. It seems clear that printing Jamaican Government business was an extremely lucrative privilege. In late 1832, several proprietors petitioned the Assembly to settle their printing accounts. William Bruce at The Jamaica Courant claimed £496; Alexander Aikman, apparently a specialist job printer rather than a newspaperman, claimed £707; James Lunan at The Kingston Chronicle £333; and Alexander Holmes at The Cornwall Chronicle claimed £436. Edward Jordon, the politically controversial free coloured editor at The Watchman claimed only £26. This small sum was possibly a result of the Assembly's discrimination against Jordon, who had been involved in serious racial and political battles throughout 1832. At the same time as these printers petitioned to settle their accounts Alexander Wells Aikman the favoured Government printer at The Royal Gazette claimed the relatively vast sum of £2,872.[115]

Only a few of the colonies seem to have employed salaried Government printers, as opposed to private printers appointed at will. The duties of men such as James Ramsey in Trinidad are often unclear because so much of the printing work was contracted out to privately-owned newspapers; this could have rendered the position of Government printer a virtual sinecure. James Ramsey's duties were clarified in July 1833, when the Governor removed all printing work from the private press and entered into an arrangement with Ramsey to print everything in a Royal Gazette. Why this was not done in other colonies remains unclear. In St. Lucia the basic situation

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[115]C.O.140/122, Jamaican Votes of the Assembly. Petitions submitted on 23 and 30 November 1832.

was fairly straightforward, but it was complicated by the use of the Government paper for political purposes. On 1 March 1830, an Order of Council directed the colonial Government Secretary, George Busteed, to secure a suitable person to carry out Government printing and conduct a weekly newspaper. Thus, the official Government printer was also to be responsible for a newspaper as distinct from a Government Gazette. Only in Dominica does there appear to have been a comparable situation. The only directive for the Dominican Assembly's printer was a list of documents he was bound to publish.[116] Aside from these, he was free to operate his newspaper as a private concern. In St. Lucia a salary of £300 exclusive of the price of paper, ink, and other materials was set aside.[117] The St. Lucia Gazette was established by January 1831, and was nominally edited and printed by two of Busteed's own young sons. The suspicion of nepotism is confirmed by events several months later when George Busteed successfully pressed for an increase of £150 to the salary.[118] In May 1831, the St. Lucian Privy Council drew up a list of thirteen specified items were to be printed separately from The Gazette. The list included memos, proclamations, ordinances, accounts, Acts of Parliament, and Orders in Council.[119]

The profitability of a newspaper was closely connected with the proprietor's personal wealth, but little evidence has been found which suggest that the majority of people involved with the press possessed any notable degree of wealth. Mary Ryan

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[116]C.O.74/16, Journals of The Dominican Assembly 1824-1825, 26 September 1825. The list included minutes of the Legislature, acts, court meetings, and notices of elections.

[117]C.O.256/2, Minutes of the St. Lucian Privy Council, pp.15-16.

[118]Ibid. 30 May 1831, pp.37-41.

[119]Ibid.

was able to educate her son in Britain, although the cost of this education is unknown.[120] Alexander Aikman, the printer to the Jamaican Assembly received a rate of remuneration which clearly lifted him well clear of the lower levels of white Jamaican society. One scholar of Jamaican history has suggested that other printers in the colony existed at a reasonably high level in white society; below the great planters and merchants, but above the white artisans.[121] William Stewart is one of the few newspaper proprietors who have been found to have had a direct economic stake in the plantation system.[122] This was during his time running The Dominica Chronicle. Stewart was born in 1776, but it is not known where. He was working as a printer in Caracas in 1812 when an earthquake struck the city. Stewart lost everything, but he escaped to Trinidad where a man named Gloster helped him with clothes and money. Stewart then moved to Dominica in early 1813, where the Chief Justice Archibald Gloster (brother of the above), advised and helped him to establish The Dominica Chronicle. The first number of the paper appeared on 3 March 1813, and it quickly displaced The Dominica Journal as the dominant newspaper in the island.[123] At some point Stewart acquired a coffee plantation, which around 1820, had a workforce of thirty-six slaves who produced forty-one cwt. of coffee. Around

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[120]The Barbados Globe, 22 April 1833.

[121]Brathwaite, Development of Creole Society, p.136.

[122]Others were the Aikman family of Jamaica who owned plantations called Wallenfield, Dunsinane, and Birnamwood. Another family of printers in Jamaica - the Strupars - owned a coffee plantation at Belle Vue. Cave, 'Early Printing,' p.173.

[123]C.O.71/63, Offices And Individuals. These early details are contained in a letter from Archibald Gloster (Dominican Chief Justice, 1812 to 1825) to Wilmot-Horton, 8 January 1825. The Dominica Journal or Weekly Intelligencer had been run by a man called Alexander Dunbar. See Pactor, British Caribbean Newspapers, p.42, and a letter to The Dominica Chronicle, 14 January 1931.

this time Stewart's income was apparently £500 per annum.[124] Stewart's wealth probably acted as a financial cushion which protected The Dominica Chronicle in 1822, when it lost £500 in a libel case. Although Stewart had to issue an editorial appeal to lax subscribers to settle their debts, he promptly paid the money on 10 October 1822, a short time after the plaintiff claimed his dues.[125] Over the years, Stewart's fortunes seem to have declined considerably. After a newspaper venture in Trinidad collapsed in 1834, Stewart returned to Dominica, probably sometime in the late 1830's. On 26 September 1840, he was appointed printer to the Legislature a second time, ironically whilst involved with The Dominica Colonist - the paper that had precipitated the collapse of The Dominica Chronicle thirteen years previously. After less than two years Stewart lost the contract a second time in February 1842. Tax returns for Dominica at this time show Stewart's income was approximately £150 per annum.[126]

Alexander Stevenson's wealth was such that The Guiana Chronicle was able to withstand two prolonged spells of enforced closure, between November 1825 and September 1826, and then between March 1831 and August 1833. Stevenson claimed that during the first period he kept his staff on at full wages, and that the first three

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[124]C.O.71/59, Huntingdon to Bathurst, 11 October 1822, no. 17. The information is contained in a report entitled A Comparative Statement of Slaves And Produce. This was compiled by whites in answer to free coloured claims that their financial status and respectability entitled them to equal civil rights.

[125]See the enclosures in C.O.71/63, Sir William Nicolay (Governor of Dominica, 1824 to 1831; Governor of St. Kitts, 1832 to 1833), to Bathurst, 12 February 1825, no. 41.

[126]See C.O.76/30, 32, Dominica Blue Books, 1840 and 1842; The Dominica Colonist, 19 February 1842; The Dominican, 12 October 1842.

months of the second enforced period of closure cost him almost £1,000 sterling.[127] There is no evidence which explains how Stevenson had amassed this wealth. The only plausible explanations would seem to be that either Stevenson had considerable personal wealth derived from economic interests outside The Guiana Chronicle, or that he was financially supported by other people.

Despite these examples there is much evidence to suggest that in general colonial editors faced relative levels of poverty and financial insecurity. The evidence which is available does not suggest that they could have accumulated great wealth from economic activities undertaken prior to their involvement with the press. Some men entered journalism after having run general stores. Abel Clinckett, Samuel Hyde, and Young Anderson had all been involved in the retail trade before trying the printing business. In the case of Anderson, his store may have been wiped out by a flood of imports into Trinidad between 1827 and 1829. These were taken on credit and were, according the Governor, superfluous to the colony's needs.[128] The retail trade would probably have had only modest financial rewards, although this in itself would not have prevented initial capital outlay on a printing establishment which was known to be small. Other editors had been employed in similar low ranking work prior to moving into journalism. Many years before working on The St. Vincent Royal Gazette Thomas LeGall had been employed as the Collector of Customs on Barbados.[129] James Scotland Snr. had worked as a clerk and a schoolmaster. Edward

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[127]C.O.111/50, Stevenson's petition of complaint, 21 November 1825, enclosed with D'Urban to Bathurst, 28 November 1825, private; Unlicensed edition of The Guiana Chronicle, 24 June 1831, filed in C.O.111/127, Smith to Stanley, 1 June 1833, no. 8.

[128]C.O.295/97, Grant to Goderich, 4 April 1833, no. 40. Comments on the 1832 Blue Book.

[129]The Barbados Mercury, 23 February 1805.

Jordon had been clerk to a Kingston merchant before opening a bookshop with Robert Osborn.[130] Thomas Warner of The Antigua Herald had also been a clerk, although this was to the island's Council; Warner later moved to Dominica, where he became Provost Marshal.[131]

The impression of a trade plagued by relative poverty is supported by the numerous public appeals which were addressed to subscribers to clear overdue accounts. This was a notorious problem for the colonial press; virtually every paper which has been examined published appeals of this sort.[132] Often they included threats to take legal action to recover debts which had built up over many years. In December 1832, The Barbadian claimed that some of its subscribers had not paid for the paper for nine years, while The Trinidad Guardian and The Weekly Register mentioned subscribers who were three or four years in arrears.[133] For The Grenada Free Press 1832 was a particularly difficult year. Despite a claim that its subscriber list that was increasing, the paper published nine appeals to clear overdue accounts. In some cases the situation must have been desperate. Two Barbadian proprietors published advertisements announcing that they would accept payment of debts in

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[130]Heuman, Between Black And White, p.59.

[131]See C.O.7/31, Sir Patrick Ross (Governor of Antigua, 1826 to 1832), to Goderich, 5 May 1831, no. 17, enclosures; C.O.76/32, Dominica Blue Book, 1842.

[132]See for example The Trinidad Gazette, 7 September 1822; The Trinidad Guardian, 19 April 1831; The Antigua Free Press, 12 September 1828 and 30 May 1833; The Weekly Register, 3 July 1827; The Grenada Free Press, 18 July 1832; The Barbados Mercury, 26 June 1821; The Barbados Globe, 4 November 1833; The Barbadian, 23 June 1832; and The Guiana Chronicle, 20 February 1822. There were many other examples.

[133]The Barbadian, 22 December 1832; The Trinidad Guardian, 27 June 1828; The Weekly Register, 3 July 1827.

produce rather than cash.[134] In October 1831, The Trinidad Guardian reported that in three weeks of trying the proprietor had collected only £14. 11s. 6d. from its Port of Spain debtors.[135] The paper closed shortly after this announcement.

It would seem therefore, that despite the appearance of economic vigour reflected in the numbers and frequency of newspapers published, printing offices were chronically short of liquidity. This must have affected the economic fortunes of proprietors. Four men who were involved with the press are known to have been unable to pay damages for libel. In August 1829, after having endured one spell in jail Robert Priest faced a second term because he did not have the wherewithal to pay £250 libel damages to the Antiguan Chief Justice. Priest was freed from jail after a public subscription was started which quickly raised the money needed.[136] In 1833, the Trinidadian Chief Justice brought a successful libel action against the proprietors and editor of The Port of Spain Gazette. The defendants were faced with paying damages of £1,200 and costs, and they were unable to raise the money. To avoid responsibility Andrew Drinan secretly left the island in May 1833, while Henry Mills and William Stewart endured a six month spell in the Port of Spain debtors' cell.[137] This general economic insecurity may have been one of the main factors which prompted editors to travel throughout the colonies seeking opportunities to ply their trade. Joseph Berrow, Matthew Gallagher, William Towart, William Stewart, Andrew Drinan, Michael Ryan, and possibly John Holman, were all examples of itinerant editors.

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[134]The Barbados Globe, 22 April 1833 - this advertisement was published in many subsequent issues; The Barbadian, 22 March 1834.

[135]The Trinidad Guardian, 11 October 1831.

[136]The Antigua Free Press, 21 August 1829. This incident is covered in detail in Chapter 5.

[137]See below pp.223-228.

The social standing of colonial editors varied due to a number of factors. In the 1820's in Britain, editors were still largely regarded by politicians as men engaged in an undignified and disreputable profession.[138] This disdainful high political view of journalists as troublemakers found distinct echoes in the West Indies, although not all colonial Governors were hostile to the extent that they made a point of ignoring the press. Sir Patrick Ross in Antigua and Sir George Hill in St. Vincent subscribed to the newspapers of those colonies; Hill took both The St. Vincent Advertiser and The St. Vincent Royal Gazette.[139] The disparaging comments about editors made by some West Indian Governors may have been because the only time they had cause to notice newspapers was when they dealt with problems created by them. It is difficult to say how much this dislike of the press was a product of their military backgrounds carried into a civilian colonial context. It is also difficult to say how much the activities of colonial papers reinforced or challenged their existing opinions. However, it seems probable that Sir Benjamin D'Urban's hostility to the ideal of a free press had formed before his arrival in Demerara, and the decade-long struggle over the freedom of the press which occurred in the colony reinforced his opinions. D'Urban was highly critical of the men behind The Guiana Chronicle. In 1826, D'Urban wrote of Matthew Barker, the former editor of the suppressed Chronicle who had presented his case at the Colonial Office:

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[138]A. Aspinall, 'The Social Status of Journalists at The Beginning of The Nineteenth Century,' The Review of English Studies 21, 81, 1945, pp.216-232.

[139]C.O.260/49, Hill to Goderich, 21 September 1832, no. 32.

> ... I have learned enough of him to be aware, that he is one of those people who inevitably give great trouble in a colony - what he is, in one respect, may be readily gathered from his having stated himself to be an officer in the Navy, when he neither was, nor ever had been, an officer.[140]

Governor Hill of Trinidad described Young Anderson of The Colonial Observer as '... a dangerous as well as an unworthy character...'[141] Sir Patrick Ross, faced with continual political controversies generated by The Antigua Free Press, eventually informed the Colonial Office that the editor, James Scotland Snr., was an '... indefatigably troublesome and mischievous individual...'[142] This degree of personal hostility was matched by officials at lower levels in the colonial administration. Hostility to the press was evinced by the President of the Demeraran Courts of Justice, members of the Executive Council of Barbados and Dominica, and the Chief Justices of Antigua and Trinidad.

Among the colonists at large the standing of editors is difficult to determine. For the free coloured editors race was obviously the crucial factor, as indeed it was for their allies in the white press. In economic terms free coloured editors were probably at a higher level than poor whites, but they could never gain full acceptance within white society. The question of social standing within their own group is a different matter, and will be dealt with in Chapter Three. Mainstream white editors influenced their standing by their response to political events. Sometimes there were occasions when political events coalesced in such a way as to confer considerable

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[140]C.O.111/56, D'Urban to Wilmot-Horton, 19 September 1826, private.

[141]C.O.295/98, Hill to Stanley, 29 August 1833, unnumbered.

[142]C.O.7/34, Ross to Goderich, 21 June 1832, no. 44.

status on editors who chose the populist side. On these occasions editors assumed a transient importance which raised them above the ordinary status of the printer. This assumption of momentary importance happened to Matthew Gallagher in Trinidad in 1810, when his imprisonment helped to precipitate the fall of an unpopular Government official. After Michael Ryan was acquitted of libel in 1819 he was carried through the streets of Bridgetown amongst a crowd reported to be over a thousand strong.[143] In Demerara in 1834, Alexander Stevenson's status was at such a high level, and Governor Smyth's at such a low ebb, that when Stevenson was acquitted of libelling him there was a general celebration in Georgetown with the ships in the harbour hoisting their flags and firing their cannons.[144] There is other evidence which gives a glimpse of how the social standing of editors was affected by politics. Trinidadian editors seem to have been particularly well-regarded. This was possibly because the colony had no representative institutions of Government and the press, partially compensating for this, had assumed a high political profile. In 1825, when the British Government's demands for change in the colonies were becoming more concerted, The Trinidad Gazette was forced to close after political pressure was brought to bear by the executive. William Lewer was later presented with a twenty-five guinea silver cup by a number of colonists, who appreciated 'the prudence, firmness, and independence with which the late Trinidad Gazette was conducted, under circumstances extremely critical.'[145] In January 1830, members of one of the

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[143]The Guiana Chronicle, 7 June 1819.

[144]C.O.111/146, Sir James Carmichael-Smyth's (Governor of British Guiana, 1833 to 1838), minute to Guianan Court of Policy, 13 August 1836, enclosed with no. 198.

[145]The Weekly Register, 29 November 1825, reprinted in The Dominica Chronicle, 7 December 1825.

colony's militia regiments toasted the health of John Shoel of The Trinidad Guardian and 'the liberty of the press' at a public dinner.[146] In 1833, Andrew Drinan, the editor of The Port of Spain Gazette, gave a speech at a public dinner in honour of James McQueen. Drinan's reference to the freedom of the Trinidadian press was apparently cheered by the diners, who included some of the most important people in the colony.

In contrast to these examples where certain editors were clearly an integral part of a general white political consensus or found themselves projected to the head of a surge of popular sentiment, there were examples where the opposite happened. In August 1831, about one hundred colonists signed a petition complaining about the editor's conduct of The St. Lucia Gazette.[147] This petition was instrumental in closing the paper. There were expressions of disapprobation of press conduct in other colonies. In 1826, almost forty colonists in the Virgin Islands submitted a petition to the Governor of St. Kitts which disapproved of The St. Kitts Gazette's attacks on him.[148] The editors of the white press who sympathised with the political claims of the free coloureds faced the dual problems of economic hardship and social ostracism by many whites. Widespread political disapproval of a colonial paper could drastically undermine an editor's social standing which inevitably had an effect on his economic status. In April 1833, James Scotland Snr. sued Samuel Otto as the author of a letter printed in The Antigua Herald. Otto's letter was a vitriolic tirade against Scotland, and

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[146]The Trinidad Guardian, 5 January 1830.

[147]C.O.253/30, Petition of St. Lucian colonists, 31 August 1831, enclosed with no. 25.

[148]C.O.239/14, *Address of The Inhabitants of The Virgin Islands to Governor Sir Charles Maxwell*, 3 July 1826. Enclosed with Sir Charles Maxwell (Governor of St. Kitts, 1816 to 1833), to Wilmot-Horton, 12 August 1826, private.

almost certainly represented the feelings of many Antiguan whites about the controversial editor:

> As to the old sinner, nothing but the hand of death can arrest his career of iniquity. His gradual but progressive descent, through all the steps that intervene between the respectability to which he was born, and the public contempt which he has achieved, will inevitably at last consign him -*"to the vile earth from whence he sprung, unwept, unhonoured and unsung."*[149]

The letter also accused Scotland of being a thieving drunkard who lived in debauchery. Two months after this appeared James Scotland Snr., printed an appeal to subscribers to settle their overdue accounts. The appeal stated:

> The diminuation of his business, occasioned by an unceasing persecution of nearly three years, together with heavy expenses of his office, and of a numerous family, render importunity unavoidable.[150]

The two quotations taken together indicate the consequences for an editor who chose to struggle against white majority political opinion. In Scotland's case political controversy had led to social condemnation, a contraction of his business, and hardship for his family. Significant levels of public disapproval probably lay behind a boycott organised against The Berbice Gazette and its associated printing business in 1827. The paper had started to print articles which were openly favourable to the British Government's general line on slavery. The proprietor, William Schultz,

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[149]The Antigua Herald, 16 March 1833, reprinted in The Antigua Free Press, 4 April 1833.

[150]Ibid. 30 May 1833.

suffered a decline in business because of the boycott and his efforts to reverse it failed.[151]

Apart from the cases where the political principles of certain editors conferred on them blanket condemnation from the white community, there is no real evidence about how the job of editor in itself was generally perceived in the colonies. It is certain that colonial editors faced problems of a very basic kind which were common to all those who worked in the profession. This was a period when editors were very much the public embodiment of their newspapers and as such they could be personally held to account for what appeared in the paper. In effect this imparted a degree of physical danger to the job of running a newspaper. In 1831, in an incident loaded with racial overtones, Henry Loving was publicly horsewhipped by a white man who took offence at something which had appeared in The Weekly Register.[152] Alexander Stevenson fought a duel because of his editorship of The Guiana Chronicle, as did Augustus Beaumont of The Jamaica Courant, although it is not certain if this was because of his activities as an editor.[153] On at least one occasion, rivalry between editors turned to physical violence. In 1834, Andrew Drinan whipped Samuel Hyde because of an article Hyde had published in The West Indian. It is unclear what this incident was about, but Hyde seems to have alleged that Drinan inaccurately reported

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[151]C.O.111/104, William Schultz's petition to Goderich, 6 July 1827, enclosed with no. 63.

[152]See below pp.121-122.

[153]The Guiana Chronicle, 5 October 1821; The Trinidad Guardian, 5 March 1830, report from The Jamaica Courant, 21 November 1829.

proceedings in the Assembly - there were also political overtones to the incident. Hyde took Drinan to court but the outcome of the case is unclear.[154]

West Indian journalism could be combined with, or lead to, involvement in politics. It is beyond the scope of this study to trace the political careers of the men concerned, but it is enough to point out that they made the move from one field to the other. There were of course precedents for this in Britain where John Wilkes and William Cobbett were famous examples. There were other individuals who followed the same path such as Edward Baines Snr., of The Leeds Mercury, who was elected as one of the members for Leeds in 1834 and served seven years in Parliament.[155] The West Indies followed the pattern set in the Mother Country, although it is noteworthy that the height of practical political influence achieved by editors in this period was a seat in the Assembly; none were selected for seats on the colonial Councils. One of the most notable examples of a politician-editor was Augustus Beaumont who entered the Jamaican Assembly in November 1829 when he was still editor of The Jamaica Courant.[156] In Dominica in 1832, John Finlay and Edward Dowdy were members of the Assembly and involved with The Dominica Colonist.[157] Dowdy's brother James, also an Assemblyman in the mid-1820's, had edited an earlier version of The Colonist called The Dominica Reporter. In St. Vincent the

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[154]The Barbadian, 5, 9 April 1834; see also C.O.28/113, Sir Lionel Smith (Governor of Barbados and the Windwards, 1833 to 1836; Governor of Jamaica, 1836 to 1839), to Thomas Spring-Rice (Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, June 1834 to November 1834), 15 July 1834, no. 24, enclosures.

[155]Read, Press And People, p.79. Baines's son, Edward Jnr., also edited The Leeds Mercury, and also sat in Parliament between 1859 and 1874.

[156]C.O.140/117, Votes of The Jamaica Assembly, 3 November 1829. There was a long tradition in the colony of newspaper editors sitting in the Assembly.

[157]C.O.71/74, MacGregor to Goderich, 25 February 1832, no. 34.

editors of both colonial papers sat in the Assembly at different times during this period. John Drape of The St. Vincent Advertiser, and Thomas LeGall of The St. Vincent Royal Gazette were bitter personal enemies. At the 1832 election Drape lost his seat in the Assembly and LeGall became a member for Kingstown. Drape contested the result, claiming that several of the free coloureds and free blacks who had voted for LeGall were ineligible to vote. The Committee appointed by the Assembly to investigate Drape's allegations rejected them.[158] The examples of the Dowdy brothers and Finlay, Drape and LeGall show that the editor-politician figure was known in the less developed islands, and there are perhaps other examples. There were several free coloureds who edited newspapers and went on to become significant political figures. The long political careers of Edward Jordon and Robert Osborn in the Jamaican Assembly have been examined by other scholars, and the first coloured man to sit in the Barbadian House was Samuel Prescod, who was elected on 6 June 1843. During the apprenticeship period Prescod edited The New Times and then The Liberal, a radical newspaper which was closely linked with elements of the coloured class.[159]

The move from journalism into politics occurred in other British possessions. One of the best-known men who followed this path was William Lyon MacKenzie, who edited The Colonial Advocate in Upper Canada from 1824 to 1834. In 1827, MacKenzie was a successful candidate in the election for the county of York, and so

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[158]C.O.260/49, Proceedings of the House of Assembly, 9 and 10 October 1832, enclosed with Hill to Goderich, 31 October 1832, no. 33. The minutes of the Assembly for this period are missing from C.O 263/7.

[159]Hilary Beckles, A History of Barbados From Amerindian Settlement to Nation-State, Cambridge 1990, pp.116-120.

began a long and controversial career in Upper Canadian politics.[160] Figures like MacKenzie appear elsewhere. At the Cape there was John Fairburn, a prominent politician who also had a long-term stake in The South African Commercial Advertiser. In New South Wales Charles Wentworth was involved in the struggles of the colony's early press and later became a member of the Legislative Council.

In the 1820's, the West Indian press was characterised by development that was uneven in both technical and political terms. Taking into account the differences of context discussed in Chapter One, it is evident that newspapers in the various colonies were moving in roughly the same direction, and several generalisations appear to be possible which make the term 'the colonial press' a meaningful expression. Printing was an accessible and extremely flexible industry. It was not prohibitively expensive for men of modest financial standing to establish newspapers, and once established the structure of the business accommodated quick changes of ownership. As economic operations printing offices were small scale in terms of employment, and apart from Jamaica, financial rewards were minimal. This, however, does not appear to have blocked some editors entering colonial politics: nor does it appear to have prevented some colonial papers exercising a political influence which was completely disproportionate to the size of the paper.

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[160]Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Vol. IX, 496-508, entry on William Lyon MacKenzie; merchant, journalist, and politician.

CHAPTER THREE: THE LIBERAL PRESS

For an historian arguably the most important features of a colonial newspaper are its editorial columns. These contain political essays, local news, attacks on rival papers, and comments on local and Imperial figures. These columns were the explicitly political face of the paper, although political allegiance was also indicated by the selection of material made from the British press. In any scrutiny of the political content of the colonial press it is important to take into account the external political forces which affected West Indian newspapers and the part played by internal colonial events. As transient features of colonial life produced in response to immediate circumstances, the press was involved in a process of reaction to the internal and external - colony and metropole - and the combination of the two imparted a unique set of characteristics to West Indian papers in this period. The way in which these two forces influenced the colonial press varied according to the political allegiance of individual papers. Analysing the response of planter newspapers to political events in Britain can give the misleading impression that the white elite was a monolithic body in thought and deed. The assumption that the whites were a tightly-knit social group, with newspapers an integral part of its political culture, overlooks class tensions that existed within white society. It also fails to acknowledge the existence of three white-owned newspapers which were cut off from the mainstream of the conventional press and white society. Two of these papers can legitimately be described as 'liberal' in the sense that they were openly pro-abolition.

Imperial politics had had a profound impact on these papers. Arguably, the liberal newspapers which emerged in the late 1820's and early 1830's were stimulated largely by political events in Britain. These papers, isolated from the mainstream of

planter political thought and seeking to change it, presented the Imperial political challenge to white colonists from within the colony. By doing so, the liberal press exposed itself to political counter-attacks from elements of the white ruling class. Thus, because the relationship between white society and liberal newspapers was so intensely strained internal politics often had a greater impact on liberal papers than on their planter counterparts. The editors of liberal papers had taken the initiative from abolitionist forces in Britain. Their decision to do so meant that they also took the inevitable planter backlash which generated a whole series of conflicts between the press and the colonial authorities.

The two most prominent white liberal newspapers were The Antigua Free Press, under the editorship of James Scotland Snr., and The Colonial Observer, under Young Anderson. The third newspaper was The St. Lucia Gazette And Public Advertiser. The St. Lucia Gazette was a short-lived newspaper, suppressed on the orders of the Colonial Secretary in January 1832. The editor, George Busteed, was the St. Lucian Government Secretary. He definitely had abolitionist sympathies, but there are no extant copies to show that he specifically devoted the paper to furthering the cause of emancipation.[1] However, it is known that Busteed used the paper to attack the immorality he perceived as pervading white colonial society, and this caused such an outcry he was removed from office. Although The St. Lucia Gazette never reached comparable status with The Free Press and The Colonial Observer, it did come to the notice of James McQueen, the planter propagandist, who dismissed it as 'the smallest

[1]Through Thomas Buxton, Busteed presented a petition to the House of Commons on 15 April 1833, claiming that the St. Lucian slaves were able to cope with emancipation. See The Barbados Globe, 20 May 1833.

thing ever published in the shape of a newspaper.'[2] When discussing The Antigua Free Press and The Colonial Observer as the outstanding examples of white-owned emancipationist papers, it would therefore be wise to bear in mind that the unusual strand of political thought represented by these papers had a counterpart of sorts in St. Lucia.

The Antigua Free Press and The Colonial Observer were part of a group of newspapers which collectively could be described as the 'liberal four.' These papers were united by similar political views. The best known is The Jamaica Watchman, but The Weekly Register in Antigua, The Antigua Free Press, and The Colonial Observer were of comparable interest. The shared editorial stance of these four newspapers was based on three essential political tenets; support for the British Government, the right of the free coloureds to civil and political enfranchisement, and immediate emancipation for the slaves. Most of their editorial pronouncements flowed naturally from these beliefs. The editors of the liberal four were all aware of each other's work, and they seem to have conceived of their papers as forming a loose political grouping, campaigning in hostile territory. This alliance was, of course, never more than an awareness of each other's existence, a willingness to use each other's papers as source material, and a readiness to declare public support and approbation for one another. In November 1833, news reached The Antigua Free Press of an attack on the liberal four by James McQueen. The Free Press responded:

> Mr McQueen, we understand, has associated with our name, in his calumnies, those of Jordon and Osborn of Jamaica, Anderson of Trinidad, and Loving of

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[2]James McQueen to Charles Thomson (St. Kitts Attorney General), 30 August 1832, reprinted in The Barbadian, 15 September 1832.

> Antigua, thus preserving, as long as time shall spare the pages of Blackwood, an honourable recollection of our humble services, and a testimony redeeming the West Indians of the present day from the ignominious charge of renouncing universally the feelings of philanthropy and duties toward our black brethren.[3]

In this instance The Free Press was answering one of McQueen's diatribes which had been published in Britain, but many of his articles appeared in the planter press.[4] The liberal four all responded to McQueen's articles with vigorous criticism. On one occasion The Watchman mentioned articles written by Scotland and Anderson, and in a gesture of solidarity wrote:

> We have also before us a pretty little article from the "Sturdy Antigonian" which, at convenience, we may lay before our readers. We guess Master McQueen don't half like Jamie Scotland. He is rather more expert at wielding the cartwhip than the former could desire. Certain it is, that he has made Master Mac writhe under its well-directed lash, whilst our brother of Trinidad, with equal skill and address, applies the "ebony" and "brine" in a way highly calculated to increase the excitement and heighten the pleasure which the great advocate of cartwhips, ebony, rods and brine was certain to experience in perusing the articles alluded to...[5]

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[3]The Antigua Free Press, 7 November 1833.

[4]See for example, The Port of Spain Gazette, 11, 25, 29 January 1833; The Barbados Globe, 28 January 1833; The Barbados Mercury, 29 January 1833; The St. Vincent Royal Gazette, 24 January 1833.

[5]The Watchman, 23 February 1833.

One particularly hostile piece written by McQueen taunted Scotland over his relationship with his black mistress. In the same article McQueen alleged that Henry Loving (described as 'a compound of mustard and malevolence'), had married a Mokko woman on the direct orders of the Anti-Slavery Society.[6] Young Anderson responded to this by writing a series of retaliatory articles in The Colonial Observer, which answered McQueen's arguments and staunchly supported Loving and Scotland. Through the press interchange system, Anderson's articles were published almost simultaneously by The Watchman and The Antigua Free Press, and they were also published in Trinidad as a pamphlet.[7]

The keenly competitive situation common to all of the colonies with more than one newspaper was compounded in Antigua because for a time the only newspapers published in the colony were politically radical. Although they professed more or less the same political views, and Scotland and Loving appear to have personally liked each other, both men were faced with the economic necessity of competing for readers.[8] Between September 1830 and January 1832, when The Antigua Herald And Gazette first appeared, the Antiguan press was unique in the British West Indies. At this time almost all of the major colonies had newspapers which broadly represented the social and economic interests of white society. Antigua not only lacked such a

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[6]The Port of Spain Gazette, 11 January 1833. Presumably the woman was African and 'Mokko' was the name of her tribe.

[7]See The Watchman, 23, 27 February, 2 March 1833; The Antigua Free Press, 21, 28 February, 7 March 1833. A copy of the pamphlet is filed in C.O.295/98, Hill to Stanley, 29 August 1833, unnumbered despatch.

[8]See James Scotland Snr.'s tribute to Loving when he gave up the editorship of The Weekly Register in The Antigua Free Press, 13 June 1833.

paper, its newspapers actively promoted political views which were thought of as heretical by most white colonists. Thus, the largest possible number of potential subscribers from the ruling elite - which was already small - was further diminished by the chosen political stance of each paper.

An explanation for the survival of the Antiguan press in these circumstances presents a major problem, but one which seems to be solved by taking into account the nuances of the politics of colour. The negative implications arising from the political opinions of the Antiguan press, in terms of profitability and survival, were mitigated for The Weekly Register because of Henry Loving's status among his own class. Loving was a free coloured who had founded one of the first free coloured newspapers in the British West Indies in 1814 when he was twenty-four years old. Two sources point to Loving having been born a slave and manumitted at the age of nine, but no evidence to corroborate this has been found.[9] Loving's parentage, early years, and education are unknown, but he must have been fairly well educated to open a successful newspaper at a relatively young age. Loving rose to prominence among Antiguan free coloureds in the late 1820's and early 1830's when he became a powerful figure. This standing reached its height in mid-1831 when he was selected as the delegate of a general committee of free coloureds to visit England. The purpose of the visit was to lobby for free coloured civil and political rights at the Colonial Office. The colonial press reported that £560 was raised to fund Loving's trip, and one

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[9]W.A. Green, British Slave Emancipation; The Sugar Colonies And The Great Experiment 1830-1865, London 1976, n. p.16; James McQueen to Stanley, 15 July 1833, reprinted in The Barbadian, 16 October 1833.

source mentions free coloureds from other colonies contributing to his costs.[10] Loving spent about a year in England, and on his return to Antigua he resumed the editorship of The Weekly Register. This lasted less than a year - in May 1833, Loving announced his retirement from the paper.

Loving's involvement with The Weekly Register occupied a large part of his working life. Between July 1827 and May 1833, Loving had complete editorial control over the paper and this was reflected in the changes which he introduced.[11] During this period, the general axiom that the man was the paper and the paper was the man applied, and therefore to plot the trajectory of increasing political radicalism in The Register from July 1827 until May 1833 is to do the same for Loving. A dramatic change of political tone was introduced in a relatively short period of time. In the mid to late 1820's, The Weekly Register's editorials were so politically cautious as to appear sycophantic towards the Antiguan Legislature and whites in general. Proceedings in the Assembly were described in the most flattering terms as were the members themselves.[12] In May 1827, the paper remarked on abolitionist activity in Britain in language that was a standard feature of planter newspapers:

> The pertinacity with which the fanatical party in Great Britain adhere to their speculative, and in many instances, impracticable schemes of philanthropy in

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[10]The Grenada Gazette [probably meaning The Grenada Chronicle], 25 June 1831, reprinted in The Port of Spain Gazette, 2 July 1831. See also Lowe, Codrington Correspondence, p.71. Robert Jarritt's letter of 28 July 1831 mentions Loving's trip to England and the raising of subscriptions.

[11]Apart from the period he spent in England, when a deputy editor - probably Joseph Shervington - had charge of the paper. Shervington was also a free coloured.

[12]See in particular, an editorial in The Weekly Register, 8 May 1827, which reviewed the activities of the Assembly over the previous seven years.

this distant quarter of the Globe, of which they have no personal knowledge... is quite astonishing, and forms an extraordinary feature of the times.[13]

Other comments were printed which appear indicative of a deeply conservative political outlook, comparable to the planter press. The British Government's policies towards the colonies were described in highly critical terms; discussions in the Privy Council on compulsory manumission were declared to be 'follies' which would provoke the slaves to insurrection. The production of sugar made 'compulsory labour indispensable' and slaves were unfit for freedom.[14] A comment from The Register in August 1828 encapsulates the political conservatism which characterised the paper at this time:

> To the great talent and exertions of our old friends John Bull and The Glasgow Courier, may be added those of several other respectable journals, who, with a disinterestedness and truly British feeling which is ever allied to a sense of justice, have embarked their services in the cause of the West India proprietors, and made common head against their enemies.[15]

John Bull and The Glasgow Courier were two of the most prominent British newspapers which offered unswerving support to West Indian slaveowners. The appearance of ingrained conservatism in The Weekly Register during the late 1820's appears to have been due to the influence of Loving's partner William Hill. From comments Loving made in a letter written in 1832, it is clear that Hill had been the dominant editorial figure on The Register, and he had insisted on caution. Hill's obitu-

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[13]Ibid. 29 May 1827.

[14]Ibid. 12, 19 February 1828, and 8 May 1827.

[15]Ibid. 12 August 1828.

ary in The Weekly Register makes no mention of his colour, and there is the possibility therefore, that he was white.[16] However, at this stage of colonial development a white-free coloured business partnership would seem unlikely, although the two classes could not avoid some degree of economic contact. Henry Loving's strong personality, which came to the fore of the paper after Hill's death, also suggests he would not have worked with a white man who deliberately stifled the political content of the paper to avoid white disapproval. However, why Loving accepted this from a fellow free coloured is unknown.

If we assume that Hill was a free coloured, his editorial caution probably stemmed from his position in Antiguan society within a class which occupied an ambiguous social position between black slave and white ruler. The position of free coloureds throughout the British Caribbean varied somewhat. In most colonies - Trinidad is the outstanding exception[17]- free coloureds could not have been a signifi-cant landholding class because all available land had long since been appropriated. Generally, free coloureds were either poverty-stricken or forced to work as artisans or in menial trades. There were of course exceptions. London Bourne of Barbados was a wealthy free coloured merchant who by 1837 was said to be worth between $20,000 and $30,000. Ralph Cleghorn of St. Kitts was another free coloured whose business rapidly expanded in the 1820's.[18] By this time literate free coloureds owned stores and worked as clerks in mercantile houses. A few had entered journalism; in addition to the newspapers of Loving and Hill in Antigua, and Jordon and Osborn in Jamaica,

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[16]Ibid. 17 July 1827.

[17]Campbell, 'Rise of a Free Coloured Plantocracy in Trinidad,' p.51.

[18]Beckles, History of Barbados, p.67; Cox, Free Coloreds of St. Kitts And Grenada, p.68.

there was The Struggler,[19] The Grenada Chronicle, and The St. Kitts Advertiser. A comparison of the political views of The Chronicle, The Advertiser, and The Weekly Register shows variations in the personal responses that free coloured editors made to their disadvantaged position in society. These ranged from repudiation of political radicalism, attempted rejection of their African heritage and connections with the free blacks and slaves, through a tentative embrace of radicalism and on to fully-fledged political campaigning on the issues of slave and free coloured rights. The range of these responses fits with wider patterns of free coloured behaviour that have been identified by other scholars.[20] However, it should be noted that free coloured editors were prominent political figures because of their involvement with newspapers - as such they are exceptional people, who cannot be taken as typical members of the free coloured class.

It would appear that William Baker at The Grenada Chronicle shied away from any commitment to political activity comparable to Loving, Jordon, and Osborn. Baker's stewardship of The Chronicle between 1827 and mid-1836 appears to have been politically cautious. However, in the early 1820's Baker had showed signs of political commitment to his class. In 1823, he had signed a petition organised by Grenadan free coloureds complaining about their disadvantaged position in society; this was submitted to the Commission inspecting legal matters in the West Indies.[21]

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[19]The Struggler was a newspaper based at Montego bay. It was financially supported by John Manderson, a free coloured merchant and landowner. See Turner, Slaves And Missionaries, p.140, n. 29.

[20]See especially, the work of Heuman, Between Black And White; Campbell, Dynamics of Change in a Slave Society; Cox, Free Coloreds of St. Kitts And Grenada; and also Beckles, History of Barbados, pp.67-69.

[21]C.O.318/76, petition of Grenadan free coloureds submitted to H.M. Commission of Inspectors, 23 May 1823.

Baker took over The Chronicle after the death of John Spahn in December 1826. I have only had access to copies of The Chronicle which date from April 1834, but the editorial column shows a marked conservatism, comparable to The Weekly Register before William Hill's death. The Chronicle felt that there was no hope of future prosperity in a post-abolition society. The cooperation of the planters with the British Government for abolition came from:

> ... a persuasion that it is the only chance which they have of securing even a part of their property in the miserable and misnamed "Compensation" awarded them by the tyranny and injustice of the Home Government; and *not* from the remotest idea that they or any part of the British West India Communities will benefit by the emancipation of their labourers.[22]

The Chronicle was one of the colonial papers which nicknamed the Act for abolition 'the Spoilation Act.' The passing of slavery did nothing to allay The Chronicle's views. In August 1834, after some apprentice unrest in the colony, the paper commented:

> To please a faction in England, the *right* of property in the colonies has been violated, and the bonds of our hitherto peculiarly formed society were torn asunder, under circumstances that too plainly evinced a reckless indifference as to ultimate consequences...[23]

The paper's conservative political stance is fairly clear - the reasons for it are not. No biographical information on Baker has been found. Obviously, his name indicates British, rather than French origins, and he was possibly one of those lighter-skinned

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[22]The Grenada Chronicle, 3 May 1834.

[23]Ibid. 16 August 1834.

free coloureds who sought to distance himself from his African origins by publicly espousing white planter sentiments. Grenadan free coloureds did hold significant amounts of land so it is also possible that Baker was a planter and slaveowner himself. Baker's political alignment of his paper with Grenadan whites is also in keeping with the analysis of the colony's free coloureds put forward by Edward Cox. Cox claims that there was a convergence between Grenadan whites and free coloureds because of similar economic interests; this helps to explain The Chronicle's editorial stance, and puts it in a broader context.[24]

The political stance of The Grenada Chronicle contrasts with the St. Kitts free coloured newspaper. The St. Kitts Advertiser was the property of the Cable family. The involvement of the Cables with printing dated back to at least 1787 when Samuel Cable, a printer became involved in early Methodist activity on St. Kitts.[25] It is possible that this Samuel Cable was involved in establishing The St. Christopher Advertiser And Weekly Intelligencer in 1782. Richard Cable was editing the paper by 1806, a position he held until 1829 when he died after a fire at his home.[26] Following this, another Samuel Cable, probably the son or brother of Richard, took over The Advertiser and worked on it until 1839. In its various forms, The St. Kitts Advertiser was something of a Cable printing dynasty as Elizabeth Cable owned the paper until the early 1870's, and another Richard Cable was involved with it from

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[24]Cox, Free Coloreds of St. Kitts And Grenada, p.150-151.

[25]Goveia, Slave Society in The British Leeward Islands, p.291; Cox, Free Coloreds of St. Kitts And Grenada, pp.112-113.

[26]The Antigua Free Press, 6 November 1829. This copied Cable's obituary from The St. Kitts Gazette, 30 October 1829. The obituary states that Cable had conducted The Advertiser for twenty-three years and was thirty-eight when he died. This would have made him only fifteen years old when he started editing the paper which seems rather unlikely. It is more likely that he was apprenticed to The Advertiser's printing office and took over the paper.

around 1877 possibly on into the twentieth century.[27] Due to lack of access I have been unable to draw a detailed political profile of The Advertiser. However, from fragments which survive as reprints in other colonial papers and from incidents in the colony involving the Cables, a tentative picture of the political sympathies of The Advertiser has emerged. There is evidence that both Richard Cable and Samuel Cable were involved in free coloured political activity on St. Kitts in the 1820's. Richard Cable had been one of the organisers who submitted a petition to the British Government's Commission of legal inspectors. Annexed to this petition was another petition presented to the St. Kitts Assembly, asking for the concession of civil and political rights, and both men had signed this document.[28]

In June 1832 The Advertiser commented approvingly on the decision of the Antiguan Assembly to grant full civil and political rights to the free coloureds - 'that most deserving class of people.' The paper then considered the status of the free coloureds and slaves in St. Kitts:

> The policy which has been upheld by the Assembly of this colony, in this particular, is, however, in perfect accordance with most of their other acts - as unwise as they are impolitic... the Acts to regulate the trial of criminal slaves, to enforce compulsory manumission, for the admission of slave evidence &c., which have all passed the Council, and are before the Assembly, where they find about six or eight supporters out of twenty-four members... With persons

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[27]Pactor, British Caribbean Newspapers, p.89; see also Richard Cable's obituary in The Dominica Guardian, 15 April 1915.

[28]C.O.318/76, material presented by free coloureds to H.M. Inspectors, Henry Maddocks and Fortunatus Dwarris. See the documents from St. Christopher.

> of this description, it must not be wondered at, that the claims of the loyal class of men should be entirely disregarded.[29]

Shortly after, the Assembly conceded civil and political rights and The Advertiser commented:

> We cannot but congratulate the country, upon the circumstance that this long-agitated and most important question, of conceding to His Majesty's free coloured and free black subjects, a full enjoyment of all their civil and political privileges, may be considered as amicably determined upon.[30]

There were other indications of liberal political sentiment. In August 1832, The Advertiser published an open letter from Charles Thomson to James McQueen. Thomson was the St. Kitts Attorney General and a known supporter of free coloured rights.[31] For some reason the two men had clashed personally, and Thomson's letter was highly critical of McQueen. A colonial newspaper's attitude to James McQueen is a reliable guide to placing it on the political spectrum. The fact that The Advertiser published Thomson's letter, and McQueen's reply appeared in the white-owned St. Kitts Gazette is strongly suggestive of the contrasting political allegiance of the two papers. Samuel Cable's political views were also underlined by an incident which occurred in 1835 during the apprenticeship period. Cable spent a short period in jail for printing editorials defending the rights of apprentices and criticising a decision

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[29]The St. Kitts Advertiser, 19 June 1832, reprinted in The Grenada Free Press, 4 July 1832.

[30]From The Advertiser, 25 September 1832, reprinted in The Grenada Free Press, 7 November 1832. Other comments which have been found indicating political parity with the liberal four are those from The Advertiser of 8 March 1831 and 30 July 1833 - reprinted in The Trinidad Guardian, 17 May 1831 and The Barbadian, 28 August 1833. See also an undated article, approving of the release of James Scotland Snr. from prison, reprinted in The Watchman, 10 March 1832.

[31]Cox, Free Coloreds of St. Kitts And Grenada, p.109.

made by the St. Kitts judiciary.[32] As with The Grenada Chronicle, this view of The Advertiser fits a pattern identified by Edward Cox. He sees contrasts between St. Kitts free coloureds and their Grenadan counterparts in that the former were aware of, and did not seem strongly to repudiate, their close societal links with the slaves. St. Kitts free coloureds were also conscious of the distance of their position from whites.[33]

Yet against this evidence must be set the fact that none of the liberal four appear to have noticed The Advertiser. In February 1833, The Watchman stated:

> The fact is that with the exception of The Antigua Free Press..., and one or two others to windward, The Antigua Weekly Register [sic] and The Jamaica Watchman are the only two really independent presses in the whole of the British West India islands - the only two who dare, in the face of danger (and at one time absolute ruin) to advocate the cause of the oppressed and deeply injured sons and daughters of Africa![34]

It would appear that in comparison with the liberal four The Advertiser was politically muted, at least before abolition. There is no doubt that it was in the same political camp, but Cable does not appear to have expressed his sentiments in such an uncompromising way as Anderson, Jordon, Scotland, and Loving. An explanation for this discrepancy may lie in the fact that Samuel Cable was at the top of the hierarchy of skin tone within the free coloured class. He was so light-skinned that he could pass as white; in 1841, a group of Quakers visiting the colony had to be told that Cable

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[32]See below pp.220-223.

[33]Cox, Free Coloreds of St. Kitts And Grenada, p.151.

[34]The Watchman, 23 February 1833.

was coloured.[35] Cable's lightness of colour, and perhaps a desire to pass as white may have made him reluctant to adopt the full-blooded radicalism expounded by Jordon and Loving. Their experiences showed that free coloured radicalism engendered white hostility, and at this point in time Cable may have been anxious to avoid the same intimidation. After disturbances amongst the apprentices on St. Kitts following abolition had died down, The Antigua Free Press observed:

> Did we not know the cautious reserve, the trembling circumspection, with which Creole Editors report events, inquire into proceedings, and discuss measures, lest they should incur the displeasure of the aristocracy and their hangers-on, we should be considerably surprised at the scanty information, amounting to almost nothing, which the St. Christopher papers furnish in regard to the late critical and alarming occurrences in that colony.[36]

Continuing political timidity on the part of The Advertiser should also be considered in light of the fact that local political power remained firmly in white hands, even after discriminatory political and civil laws had been abolished. The oligarchy of the colony remained a white oligarchy; a situation that was applicable throughout the colonies. The numerical superiority of free coloureds over whites was not translated into practical control of the colonial institutions. The first free coloureds were elected to the Jamaican Assembly in October 1831 when Price Watkis was elected as a member

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[35]Richard Frucht, 'From Slavery to Unfreedom in The Plantation Society of St. Kitts,' p.382, in Comparative Perspectives on Slavery in New World Plantation Societies, from The Annals of The New York Academy of Sciences, Vol. 292, Vera Rubin and Arthur Tuden, eds.

[36]The Antigua Free Press, 28 August 1834.

for Kingston, and John Manderson was elected member for St. James.[37] Five other free coloureds followed in the mid-1830's, but they could achieve little against white supremacy even when they voted as a group. Free coloureds sat in the Assembly of St. Kitts and Grenada by 1833, but again they were outnumbered by whites.[38] Antiguan free coloureds had long been qualified to vote, but the first of their number to sit in the Assembly was probably William Thibou, a merchant who was a member by 1840.[39] Samuel Prescod, the editor of The Liberal, entered the Barbadian Assembly in June 1843, the first known member of black ancestry.[40]

The political radicalism embraced by The Weekly Register contrasted sharply with the conservatism of The Grenada Chronicle and the tentative radicalism of The St. Kitts Advertiser. By the late 1820's the assertive political mood of Antiguan free coloureds was clearly reflected in The Register. The exact timing of the change is uncertain, but sometime between August 1828 and October 1829, Henry Loving started to infuse the paper with a politically aggressive tone which proved intimidating to Antiguan whites. Loving himself admitted that the early years of the paper had been marked by political timidity. During a trial for libel in October 1829, Loving conducted his own defence, and at one point said of the paper:

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[37]Heuman, Between Black And White, p.57.

[38]Edward Cox, 'The Free Coloureds And Slave Emancipation in The British West Indies: The Case of St. Kitts And Grenada,' The Journal of Caribbean History 22, 1-2, 1988, p.81.

[39]Reserved Photocopy 2616/1 (E30). William Thibou's political opinions can be gauged from the fact that in February 1832 he had testified for James Scotland Snr. in a dispute with the Antiguan Attorney General, William Lee. See enclosures in C.O.7/33, Ross to Goderich, 28 February 1832, no. 15.

[40]Beckles, History of Barbados, p.118.

> ... the columns of that journal will bear ample testimony whether I did not, till a late period, gloss over the errors of the local Government.[41]

By 1832, Loving had become extremely critical of the enfeebled political content of the paper prior to his taking full control:

> ... if I can be brought at all to own that it possessed any merit... it must be by a confession that it was not friendly to the rights of the people - that its columns were shut against the freedom of public discussion - that it had a fashionable conscience, which, like most editorial consciences could stretch to any length - and in fact that it told lies and screened every abuse in the state. From all of which I have since delivered it, because I had not previously been in the editorial chair; and I now disclaim any part of the obloquy which attached to so worthless a publication in the estimation of every liberal mind.[42]

Enacting this change and sustaining this level of political commitment seems to have taken a personal toll on Loving. Almost a year after he had left The Register Loving wrote to The Free Press saying 'I had promised myself never again to meddle with party spirit or newspaper politics...'[43] Having altered the political content of The Weekly Register, Loving later became guilty of presenting his past in a rather disingenuous way. Once the change had been made, The Register occasionally printed self-congratulatory editorials concerning the independence of its political stance and conduct:

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[41]The Weekly Register, 3 November 1829.

[42]Henry Loving to Abel Clinckett, 29 October 1832, reprinted in The Barbadian, 14 November 1832.

[43]The Antigua Free Press, 20 March 1834.

> For ourselves we claim the proud station of being among the few, the very few, who have boldly stood forward to support the truth, to condemn the measures of the colonial Governments, and to persuade, rebuke, or expose, as the case might be.[44]

The most important factor in the change of The Register was that after William Hill died in July 1827, Loving became entirely responsible for editorial decisions. This enabled his strong personality to shape the paper. Loving's strength of character was demonstrated by some of the comments made by the Antiguan free coloured committee of correspondence on Loving's conduct whilst he was in England. Loving had criticised the Governor of Antigua, claiming that he had deliberately slowed free coloured advancement, and this had been relayed back to the colony. George Cranston, the secretary of the committee wrote a letter reprimanding Loving, but excusing him because of:

> ... those excited feelings, which naturally prevail with most men, and as we know, in an eminent degree with yourself, when giving vent to the expression of, and descanting upon those odious, undeserved and unjust restrictions which you, in common with the class to which you belong, still continue to be borne down with...[45]

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[44]The Weekly Register, 31 May 1831. It was a tendency Loving repeated much later. In 1848 he solicited promotion from the Secretary of State for the Colonies. In recounting his career in colonial administration, Loving claimed that he had been selected as Antiguan Superintendent of Police in preference to thirty other candidates. Governor MacGregor had in fact chosen Loving as the only candidate available. However, this is not to say that MacGregor - who had a high regard for Loving - would not have chosen him if other candidates had come forward. See C.O.7/39, MacGregor to Spring-Rice, 21 July 1834, no. 155; C.O.7/89, Loving's petition to Earl Grey, 19 January 1848, enclosed with Higginson to Grey, 31 January 1848, unnumbered.

[45]C.O.7/33, George Cranston to Henry Loving, 19 December 1831, enclosed with no. 8. There appears to have been some dissention among free coloureds over Loving's conduct. See other enclosures with no. 8.

In addition to Loving's forceful personality which had been given free rein at The Register following Hill's death, there were other factors which influenced the change. One, was that Loving appears to have possessed sound political judgement which was not impaired by an overbearing character. It seems clear that Loving felt it was an opportune moment to go on the political offensive. The Antiguan free coloureds were increasing the pressure for change and the British Government appeared to be moving inexorably towards abolition. In the face of these twin thrusts the transformation of The Weekly Register makes sense. Loving was a leading Antiguan free coloured, and given the evidence of his personality, it is inconceivable that he would have wasted the opportunity. A final point worth considering is that after September 1830 Loving may have been inspired by The Antigua Free Press to match the bold editorial radicalism of James Scotland Snr., thus explaining how the two papers entered into their symbiotic relationship.

Despite the politicisation of The Register, it must be emphasized that as with other free coloured activity in the British Caribbean, the political assertiveness of Antiguan free coloureds operated within strict boundaries. Free coloured radicalism was primarily defined against, on the one hand, white intransigence, and on the other, slave unrest. The free coloureds were striving to overcome the white monopoly of power, but they were not interested in aiding revolutionary upheaval from below. In the event of such disturbances free coloured property as well as white was at risk. In March 1831 there was a spate of slave unrest in Antigua, with some twenty-two plantations fired.[46] The disturbances were effectively quelled, and the Governor, Sir

[46]See David Barry Gaspar, 'Slavery, Amelioration, And Sunday Markets in Antigua, 1823-1831,' in Slavery And Abolition 9, 1, 1988, pp.1-28. Gaspar's 'Working The System- Antigua Slaves And Their Struggle to Live,' Slavery And Abolition 13, 3, 1992, pp.131-155, also examines this unrest

Patrick Ross, made a point of addressing the colony's Assembly on the conduct of free coloured militiamen in helping to still the unrest. Ross used this as a pretext for encouraging the Assembly to repeal discriminatory legislation against the free coloureds.[47] Yet shortly after this there were disturbances involving free coloureds that were directly connected with an assault on Henry Loving by a white man. It is certain that Loving himself would not have approved of slave insurrections; as a man of property and of considerable standing he had much to lose from such unrest. It is evident that Loving's political radicalism was also circumscribed by religious conviction. Loving had actually demanded the abolition of Sunday markets which had caused the unrest, describing them as a disgrace.[48] To talk of Antiguan free coloured radicalism is, therefore, to talk of demands for constitutional change, not revolutionary upheaval.

It is fairly certain that the great majority of Antiguan whites found the assertiveness of the newly-politicised Weekly Register abhorrent. However, this did not necessarily mean an economic contraction of the paper because of the withdrawal of subscribers and advertisers and a boycott of the paper's associated printing business. Although some whites must have purchased the paper because of the need to keep abreast of commercial news, The Register's natural constituency lay not with the whites but with Loving's own class who were keen to support the paper. This support quite possibly extended down the hierarchy of skin tone within the free coloured class. Certainly, Loving's own political views do not seem to have

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within a longer historical period.

[47]C.O.7/31, Address to the Legislature, 7 April 1831, enclosed with Ross to Goderich, 1 May 1831, no. 15.

[48]The Weekly Register, 30 March 1830.

incorporated the hostility that many lighter skinned free coloureds showed towards darker free coloureds, free blacks, and slaves. For example, at one stage it was suggested in Antigua that only free coloureds should enjoy full civil and political rights; in response Loving resolved not to desert free blacks.[49] After abolition Governor MacGregor confirmed this view when he said of Loving:

> Mr Loving had advocated the cause of his own class, as well as that of the slaves, and, according to the best of my information, possesses a predominating influence over them.[50]

Loving was, however, a slave owner himself, submitting one compensatory claim after abolition.[51]

The size of the Antiguan free coloured population at this time is uncertain, although Loving and other free coloureds had conducted a private survey in 1828 which came up with a figure of five thousand four hundred.[52] There is no indication of the level of literacy within this group, but for newspapers which relied on subscriber lists of hundreds rather than thousands, it seems large enough to have supported The Register. Both The Weekly Register and The Watchman in Jamaica formed organic parts of the free coloured class and were integral in the struggle to achieve political and civil emancipation. The decisions of the men in charge to use the

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[49]The Weekly Register, 19 April 1831, quoted in Charles Wesley, 'The Emancipation of The Free Coloured Population in The British Empire,' The Journal of Negro History 19, April 1934, p.164.

[50]C.O.7/39, MacGregor to Spring-Rice, 21 July 1834, no. 155. From James MacQueen's, description of Loving as 'a compound of mustard and malevolence', it would appear Loving himself was light skinned. See McQueen's *Address to The Planters of The British West Indies* published in The Port of Spain Gazette, 11 January 1833.

[51]V.L. Oliver, The History of The Island of Antigua; One of The Leeward Caribees in The West Indies, From The Settlement in 1635 to The Present Time, 3 Vols., London 1894-1899, Vol. III, 312.

[52]*Select Committee*, p.158.

papers in this way were self-consciously political acts; on one occasion, for example, The Register described itself as 'the mouthpiece of the people of colour.'[53] There is clear evidence that the relationship between these papers and their readers was reciprocal. In April 1832, Edward Jordon was prosecuted under the Constructive Treason Act which carried the death penalty for anyone convicted of publishing seditious material. On the day of his trial armed free coloureds were present in the courtroom to prevent a guilty verdict. The Attorney General refused to prosecute the case, the editorship of The Watchman proved impossible to determine, and so Jordon was acquitted.[54] A year previously, an incident had occurred in Antigua which bore certain similarities to this affair. After the March slave unrest in Antigua several slaves were executed. A man called Talbot Jarritt gave evidence at the trial of one of these slaves and Jarritt died a few weeks after the slave was executed. The Register published Jarritt's obituary on 3 May:

> This individual was the principal evidence against John, who was executed on a charge of having set fire to his master's canes during the late disorders, and it is remarkable that he has outlived that unfortunate man but a short time.[55]

Jarritt's brother, Robert, took this to mean that Loving was hinting at divine retribution, and on 13 May he publicly horsewhipped him. A large crowd of free coloureds gathered, and after racial insults were shouted by Jarritt's friends a minor disturbance occurred. The two men who had shouted insults were beaten, and a

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[53]The Weekly Register, 3 May 1831.

[54]See Campbell, Dynamics of Change,p.164; Heuman, Between Black And White, p.88. Jordon was tried and convicted later in the year. The Secretary of State intervened to release him and remit the fine which had been imposed.

[55]The Weekly Register, 3 May 1831.

constable was sent running for cover. Loving pressed charges against Jarritt for assault, and another more serious disturbance followed when Jarritt appeared at the St. John's courthouse on 17 May. He was accompanied by four armed white men and between twenty and thirty slaves carrying bludgeons. According to The Free Press the one hundred and fifty-strong crowd which gathered was 'eight tenths' women, but during the skirmish which followed the hearing several free coloured men were injured.[56] As with the armed free coloureds attending Jordon's trial, this incident has distinct signs of free coloured political awareness. The crowd was acting in solidarity with one of their own. The fact that it was the proprietor and editor of the colony's free coloured newspaper is proof of how close the paper was to the free coloured class. A final indication of the regard Antiguan free coloureds had for Loving's political activities came on 31 July 1834 when a group of them presented him with a commemorative silver cup, inscribed with a branch of laurel supporting the cap of liberty, and the message:

> Henry Loving Esq.
>
> For his magnanimous and successful exertions in behalf of his suffering brethren, whereby their rights were conceded on the 4th day of June 1832.[57]

After Loving had retired from The Register he moved into the import and retail trade, opening a store in St. John's Town. In July 1834, Governor MacGregor appointed Loving to the post of Antiguan Superintendent of Police, an official position with a salary of £300 per annum. Loving's appointment met with some white opposition,

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[56]The Antigua Free Press, 19 May 1831.

[57]This presentation was reported in The Antigua Free Press, 7 August 1834.

apparently on the grounds that Loving's political activities at The Register had been unacceptable. By March 1836, Loving had become acting private Secretary to MacGregor; he carried out his duties so well he was favourably mentioned in a despatch to the Colonial Office. In July 1837, after a recommendation from MacGregor, Loving was appointed as a Stipendiary Magistrate in Barbados. Again, the post lasted less than a year. In March 1838, Loving was appointed as island Secretary and Clerk to the Crown on Montserrat. Governor MacGregor had cautioned Loving against accepting this post and his advice proved right. At some point Loving's salary was cut from £225 to £170 per annum and he went two years without receiving any money at all. Despite soliciting promotion, Loving never rose above this position. The exact date of his death is unknown, but it is probable that he died on Antigua in mid-1850, after a long and debilitating illness which had robbed him of his mental faculties.[58]

For The Antigua Free Press the economic implications of its political radicalism were critical. Ordinary colonists as well as Assemblymen had strong views on what material they thought was politically unacceptable to appear in the local press and white disapproval could precipitate the collapse of a newspaper. The financial damage that was inflicted on The Berbice Gazette for alleged political indiscretion was

[58]The biographical details in this section on the life of Henry Loving were compiled from various sources: The Antigua Free Press, 30 May, 13 June 1833; C.O.7/39, MacGregor to Spring-Rice, 21 July 1834, no. 155; Mrs Flannigan, Antigua And The Antiguans: A Full Account of The Colony From The Time of The Caribs to The Present Day, London 1844, Vol. I, 147-148; C.O.7/43, MacGregor to Glenelg, 15 March 1836, no. 50, 25 June 1836, no. 140; C.O.178/8, Montserrat Blue Book, 1838; C.O.-7/66, Loving's petition to Governor MacPhail, 16 December 1840, enclosed with no. 9; C.O.7/96, Macintosh to Grey, 17 May 1850, no. 49.

proof that white disapproval could be effectively organised to punish an offending newspaper.[59] James Scotland Snr. was a white Creole Methodist whose political beliefs as expressed in The Free Press drove him away from his own ethnic group. Scotland's father was John Scotland, a slave-owning merchant whose origins were possibly in Edinburgh. James Scotland was born in Antigua on 4 May 1774, one of four brothers and three sisters. He was educated at Wandsworth and Charterhouse schools, from which latter institution he was expelled. Scotland matriculated at Trinity College Cambridge at Michaelmas 1792, and was admitted to the Inner Temple on 5 July 1793. John Scotland had made provision in his will that his son was to receive £200 a year whilst he studied at Cambridge. Scotland returned to Antigua in the early 1800's, and his personal and professional history from that moment until he took over The Free Press is rather vague. He married a woman called Esther soon after his arrival back on Antigua, but she appears to have died in 1805. The couple had a daughter, also called Esther, and other children - notably, James Scotland Jnr., who became a Barrister and member of the Antiguan Assembly. Around 1805 Scotland appears to have worked as the editor of an Antiguan paper called The Journal; he was a clerk between 1806 and 1810; and in 1818 he was a schoolmaster. In the late 1820's and early 1830's he was Vestry Clerk in St. Mary's parish. On 10 September 1830, Scotland took over The Antigua Free Press. He edited it for just over four years, retiring from the paper in early 1835; its closure probably followed soon after.

Robert Priest, Scotland's predecessor at The Free Press, had died aged thirty-five on 2 September 1830 and Scotland took control of the paper a few days later. Within a year of taking it over, Scotland had purged The Free Press of Priest's

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[59]See above pp.94.

hostility to humanitarian ideas. Until August 1832, when Young Anderson established The Colonial Observer in Trinidad, there was nothing which quite compared to The Free Press in any other colony. On virtually every political issue which white society felt threatened by and feared, The Antigua Free Press expressed opposition to prevailing white opinion. On the question of the boundaries of power between imperial power and colony - which was at the root of much of the tension in this period - The Free Press observed:

> ... however unquestionable, sacred and undiminishable our political and civil rights may be deemed, we form, after all, only an *imperium* sub *imperium*. We have received and hold all our advantages from a higher power, and, are therefore accountable to, and under the (constitutional) direction of, that power.[60]

On the subject of race relations, The Free Press was genuinely committed to free coloured rights and immediate emancipation. Scotland reiterated these views time and time again. Of the slave, The Free Press stated he was 'our equal by nature, a being endowed with the capacities, and entitled to all the rights of humanity.'[61] Such statements, which to the majority of whites were political and social heresy, were buttressed by Scotland's views on other subjects. The paper did not hesitate to speak out critically against the Antiguan colonial Government which it held to be corrupt and biased. Other colonial Legislatures were also criticised:

> Unhappily, prejudice, passion and precipitation are prominent characteristics of our Legislatures, and, of late years, the simple fact of any measure

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[60]The Antigua Free Press, 26 April 1832.

[61]Ibid. 16 May 1833.

regarding the slave population being recommended by the British Government for enactment has been sufficient to stir up their anger and opposition.[62]

The Free Press condemned instances of slave unrest, but attributed them to the violence with which whites conducted political discourse in the colonies, rather than to the usual scapegoats named by the planter press - missionaries and unknown 'incendiaries.'[63] After the 1832 Jamaican revolt, the paper insisted that the missionaries were entirely free from blame, and as proof of this printed an account of the trial of a Moravian minister who had been acquitted on 12 January 1832.[64] In place of the adulatory praise of James McQueen which appeared in the planter press, Scotland dismissed him as a 'grant-hunting demagogue' whose interference in colonial affairs was 'unwise and dangerous.'[65]

As with The Weekly Register, it is possible to discern an increase in the political self-confidence of The Free Press. The change was epitomised in May 1833 in an answer Scotland made to accusations from The Antigua Herald that his political views were inconsistent:

> In 1830 we felt no less deeply, than at this hour, the equity and indispensableness of disenthralling our sable brethren from their degrading bondage; but considerable apprehension clang to our mind, that the alteration of their condition, if too sudden, would be productive of calamitous consequences: whereas now, without any change of opinion as to the right of the

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[62]Ibid. See issues dated 2 February, 2 August 1832, and 17 October 1833.

[63]Ibid. 1 March, 28 June 1832.

[64]Ibid. 19 April 1832.

[65]Ibid. 5 July, 23 August 1832.

> slave to freedom, and the imperative command of justice to invest him with it, we look upon the instant execution of the project to be far less hazardous than its delay.[66]

To bolster his own editorial efforts Scotland published a large amount of material from other sources that put forward emancipationist arguments. A variety of pamphlets, speeches, and articles appeared in The Free Press,[67] all insisting that colonial resistance to the British Government was futile, and that the emancipation of the slaves was essential, from a sense of natural justice as well as practicality. It was inevitable that the Antiguan press would achieve a high political profile, and the combination of The Free Press and The Weekly Register became famous throughout the colonies and in Britain. James McQueen described Antigua as:

> ... more than other colonies, cursed and scourged, by having become the headquarters of a gang of anti-colonial incendiaries. Despicable from their ignorance, though formidable from their madness...[68]

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[66]Ibid. 16 May 1833.

[67]See, for example, letter from 'Congo Himself,' urging social mixing between the races, and the teaching of the Bible to slaves, 9 June 1831; minutes of a meeting of The London Anti-Slavery Society, 30 June 1831; article from The Christian Advocate, on Edward Jordon's second trial in Jamaica, 29 November 1832; article from The Christian Advocate on the slave trade, 13 December 1832; extract from the testimony of the Reverend Peter Duncan before the 1832 Select Committee, 17 January 1833; article from The Christian Advocate, on the claims of the slaves to compensation, 14 February 1833; article from The Christian Advocate, on the Reverend John Barry's testimony before the Select Committee, 14 March 1833; article from 'A Thorough Abolitionist,' 28 March 1833; pamphlet entitled *Outline For a Plan of Total, Immediate, And Safe Abolition of Slavery* by Joseph Phillips, 18 July 1833; petition presented to Parliament by Daniel O'Connell protesting against compensation for the planters, 1 August 1833; article from The Christian Advocate announcing the closure of The Jamaica Courant - 'this mendacious journal' - 19 December 1833.

[68]The Port of Spain Gazette, 11 January 1833.

The response of planter papers was to denounce the Antiguan press as incendiary, and to bestow a number of derogatory nicknames on Scotland - *the old cock of Antigua, old mischief, the old serpent.*

As a white man Scotland's own racial group would ordinarily have been expected to provide much of the necessary support for The Free Press in terms of subscriptions and advertising, as happened when the paper was under the control of Robert Priest. However, even then, when The Free Press espoused the shared ideals of white society, it seems to have had a subscriber list of only two hundred. How the paper could have survived under James Scotland Snr., when it professed views which fundamentally challenged the core beliefs of white colonial supremacy is difficult to determine. As well as publishing unpalatable political opinions, Scotland specifically set his paper against the planter class:

> In regard to our own island, its history clearly shows, that the proprietors of estates have always considered, and kept themselves, as a distinct order from their fellow-citizens, setting their interests in opposition to the rest, and invariably claiming for them a preponderance over those of others.[69]

Given the paper's politics, its disassociation from the planting class, and its failure to secure any Government printing work, how it managed to survive is open to conjecture.[70] Speculation based on a few tentative pieces of evidence suggests two possibilities. Firstly, it would appear that Scotland's efforts at The Free Press were held in high esteem by the Antiguan free coloureds. On 4 June 1832, a general meeting of free coloureds was called to celebrate the concession of civil and political

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[69]The Antigua Free Press, 18 April 1833.

[70]Ibid. 15 March 1832, 8 May 1834.

rights. A resolution was passed at the meeting thanking Scotland 'for his liberal, friendly and valuable advocacy of their just rights and privileges in the columns of that interesting journal.'[71] Three months later, at a dinner organised to welcome Henry Loving back to Antigua from England, a toast was proposed to Scotland and his son James as 'the unflinching advocates of the poor and oppressed.'[72] This esteem may have manifested itself in the form of free coloured subscribers and advertisers. The other possibility which may explain how The Free Press - and also The Register - managed to survive is that they received assistance from the Anti-Slavery Society and the abolitionist movement. The evidence for this is circumstantial. James McQueen, for example, accused the Anti-Slavery Society of supplying Scotland with paper.[73] Robert Jarritt, the man who had horsewhipped Henry Loving, mentioned the Antiguan papers several times in his correspondence with his absentee employers. Jarritt described the Antiguan papers as:

> ... equally in the interests, and no doubt in the pay of the Anti-Slavery Society.[74]

While Henry Loving was in England, Jarritt wrote, probably reflecting the view of 143many Antiguan whites:

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[71]Ibid. 7 June 1832.

[72]Ibid. 27 September 1832. James Scotland Jnr. was a prominent member of the Antiguan Assembly.

[73]See McQueen's letter to Stanley, 15 July 1833, reprinted in The Barbadian, 16 October 1833.

[74]Lowe ed., Codrington Correspondence, p.71, Jarritt to Codrington, 5 September 1831.

> It is known that Loving has a guinea a day for attending the Anti-Slavery meetings and making speeches and lies for them, and his travelling expenses paid, and paid out of the pockets of the credulous duped English fools.[75]

The Governor of Antigua also felt that there was a direct link between The Antigua Free Press and the Anti-Slavery Society. In December 1831, Governor Ross wrote to the Colonial Office mentioning 'the insidious motives of the editor [Scotland] and of his Employers in England...'[76] There are other signs that the Antiguan press had connections with abolitionists. When Henry Loving went to England in 1831 his address was 18 Aldermanbury, which was the centre for the abolitionist movement. During the apprenticeship period, Lord Glenelg, then Secretary of State for the Colonies, received a letter from Thomas Fowell Buxton. Buxton's letter has not survived, but Glenelg's reply clearly shows Buxton had known about Scotland's endeavours in Antigua. Buxton had asked Glenelg to reward Scotland with a position in the colonial service 'on the grounds of justice, as well as of charity.' Despite being sympathetic to the request Glenelg turned it down.[77] On several occasions Scotland himself denied that there was any link between The Free Press and the Anti-Slavery Society, apart from their shared political goals.[78] These public denials may have been the result of his regard for self-preservation, but this is unlikely. Simply by publishing the material he did, Scotland took personal risks, and publicly confirming what many

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[75]Ibid. 5 May 1832.

[76]C.O.7/31, Ross to Goderich, 20 December 1831, no. 39.

[77]C.O.393/4, Glenelg to T.F. Buxton, 22 July 1837.

[78]The Antigua Free Press, 29 November 1832, 21 February, 4 April 1833.

colonists must have believed anyway would not have endangered him to a greater degree.

The work of James Scotland Snr. has been analysed in some depth because of his unique position as the only white colonial editor to sustain a high profile anti-slavery campaign in the face of overwhelming hostility. Young Anderson at The Colonial Observer was a comparable figure, but his motives and achievements as a colonial anti-slavery editor are in many ways problematic and difficult to assess. The problem is that there is no comparable framework, political or otherwise, in which The Observer can be fixed. The Watchman and The Weekly Register can be considered within political frameworks constructed from their relationships with their readership and with political events in Jamaica and Antigua. The Antigua Free Press can be explained in terms of its editor's personal religious and political convictions.[79] These infused the paper with a religious fervour which increased in intensity as James Scotland Snr. was persecuted by the Antiguan authorities. With Scotland there is the sense that he found a feeling of personal religious fulfilment in editing The Free Press as he did, and indeed as suffering as he did. From prison he wrote:

> ... we trust that, the martyrdom... which we now suffer, in the cause of humane and Christian liberality, will eventually forge fetters for those who would set law and justice at naught in order to wreak their vengeance, and will extort just concessions from the hands which would withhold the rights of others.[80]

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[79]Although it must be stated that Scotland admitted to the traditional white colonial activities of keeping a mistress and of drunkenness. See The Antigua Free Press, 21 February, 11 April 1833.

[80]Ibid. 12 January 1832.

When emancipation became a reality, Scotland's reason for being involved in journalism was removed and he withdrew from the profession. In late 1834 Scotland applied to be a Stipendiary Magistrate, but Antigua's immediate transition to free labour obviated the need for these officials. He was later appointed an Antiguan Master in Chancery, and on 21 February 1840 he was appointed Deputy Postmaster General of Antigua, a salaried position of £80 per annum which he held until his death on 2 July 1849.[81]

Both Jordon and Scotland regarded Young Anderson as one of their group,[82] but he was something of a maverick figure. In 1831, The Port of Spain Gazette offered the following view of emancipation, and in doing so inadvertently predicted Anderson's role in Trinidadian politics:

> ... in our opinion it never will be made a Ministerial question, but is confined almost exclusively to Methodist preachers, or to *needy adventurers* [my italics], who make it a stepping stone to public notice...[83]

Anderson's motives, as far as they can be determined from statements in his newspaper and private correspondence, appeared to stem more from personal expediency than from any firmly held political or religious convictions. He admitted as much:

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[81]The biographical details in this section on the life of James Scotland Snr. were from various sources: Lowe ed., Codrington Correspondence, p.71; Dobson, Directory of Scottish Settlers, Vol. VI, 104; Oliver, History of Antigua, Vol. III, 73-74; R.L. Arrowsmith, Charterhouse Register June 1769-May 1872, Godalming 1964, p.296; J.A. Venn, Alumi Cantabrigienses, Cambridge 1953, Part II. V; Pactor, British Caribbean Newspapers, p.2; Various editions of The Weekly Register and The Antigua Free Press from the late 1820's and early 1830's; C.O. 7/36, MacGregor to Stanley, 31 August 1833, no. 117; C.O.10/19, 25, 33, Antigua Blue Books for relevant years.

[82]There is no evidence that Henry Loving felt the same way, but it is likely he did.

[83]The Port of Spain Gazette, 3 August 1831.

> I will be candid, Sir, to confess that for my part, having suffered considerably in an unsuccessful speculation, I have been exerting my interest with a view to being replaced [sic] in the service of the colonial Government.[84]

There is nothing in the biographical information on Anderson which challenges this view of him as someone seeking profitable openings for himself. Outside of the years between 1825 and 1836, virtually nothing is known about Anderson. He was related to James Scotland Snr., whose Aunt Marion had married Henry Anderson, an Edinburgh shoemaker. It is unknown when and where Young Anderson was born or when and where he died. It seems he was a West Indian creole, but not a Trinidadian. His family had settled in the colony and Anderson, after a formative education in England and France, had trained as a lawyer. Anderson claimed that his family were established West Indians who had voluntarily relinquished all connections with the plantation economy. In the late 1820's, Anderson ran a store, importing and retailing a variety of goods which ranged from foodstuffs to clothes and musical instruments. Anderson served in an unknown public office for six years and had been temporary Alguacil Mayor in 1825. In 1832, after fourteen years service in the Trinidad Militia, he had attained the rank of senior captain in the Royal Trinidad Artillery.

Anderson made two separate attempts at establishing himself in the field of Trinidadian journalism, but for the purposes of this study it is best to consider them together. The first attempt, with The Royal Gazette, lasted only five months between January and June 1832. The public furore that greeted a newspaper supportive of the Imperial Government was so great that the paper was suppressed by the Governor.

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[84]C.O.295/98, Anderson to Stanley, 21 July 1833, enclosed with Hill to Stanley, 29 August 1833, unnumbered.

Anderson had resigned from the editorship before this happened,[85] and almost immediately began a second attempt to establish a newspaper. The first issue of The Colonial Observer appeared on 4 August 1832: it closed after some eighteen months in early 1834. Anderson's editorial discretion with The Royal Gazette had been somewhat limited because of his printing obligations to Government House. This had not however, prevented him from conducting the paper in a semi-independent manner. Eventually, the Governor judged that even this semi-independence was excessive. He ordered that The Royal Gazette be split into two sections. One, headlined **OFFICIAL**, contained official business; the other headlined **NON-OFFICIAL** was Anderson's work.[86] This was deemed insufficient to curb the problems which had arisen, and The Royal Gazette was closed. With The Observer Anderson enjoyed complete freedom as a private newspaper proprietor, although he did possess the contract to print Government business which gave the executive leverage over the paper. Anderson's editorial conduct of both papers appears to have been unpredictable and inconsistent, a fact which reinforces the view that he was no ideologist, but a self-seeking opportunist.

Because of the lack of extant copies it is difficult to construct detailed political profiles for either The Royal Gazette or The Observer. However, by collating other sources an outline of the general stance of Anderson's papers becomes clear. Anderson's motives and editorial stance were uncritically described in detail by a contemporary source:

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[85]Anderson's letter of resignation was published in The Port of Spain Gazette, 30 June 1832.

[86]A copy of the split edition of The Royal Gazette, 23 May 1832, is filed in C.O.295/93, Grant to Howick, 27 July 1832, private.

> He raised his voice in the very den of slavery. The planters started with dismay; the poor bondsman looked up with hope to his courageous advocate. Finding that something more was requisite than his simple voice and example, Mr Anderson, at great expense to himself, established the best conducted journal which for many years had appeared in the West Indies; and while he mildly but firmly exposed the wrongs of the negroes, he, at the same time, in treatises breathing the spirit of the purest benevolence, pointed out to the planters the line of proceeding, which, in the actual state of public feeling, it behoved them to adopt, whether as good men, or as *wise* men.[87]

The politics of The Royal Gazette and The Observer can also be gauged from the hostile reaction of the planter press in Trinidad and other islands. The Port of Spain Gazette printed biting criticism of both The Royal Gazette and The Colonial Observer. The Royal Gazette was known by the nickname *The Foolscap Folio* and was assailed as an 'execrable vehicle of Saintism, misrepresentation, and mischief.'[88] In January 1833, The Observer criticised James McQueen, then staying in the island, and The Port of Spain Gazette responded:

> When he leaves us, the curs will no doubt resume their yelpings; and then we say unto them, it will be our turn to handle the whip and lash the degenerate and worthless pack.[89]

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[87]Hodgson, Truths From The West Indies, pp.202-203.

[88]The Port of Spain Gazette, 25 July 1832.

[89]Ibid. 29 January 1833.

The Port of Spain Gazette later described the principles of The Observer as 'anti colonial' and 'Buxtonian.'[90] To The Barbadian, The Observer was 'a nice tool in the hands of a relentless faction' and a 'miserable sheet of foolscap.'[91]

In the surviving copies of The Observer, there is one article which confirms that the paper gave prominent coverage to humanitarian concerns. However, the manner of its publication also highlights the main dilemma in assessing the paper's place within the liberal four. The article was a petition to Lord Goderich from a slave called John MacDonald. The basis of MacDonald's petition - that he was a freeman, illegally forced back into slavery when he arrived in Trinidad - was probably genuine, but there were passages in it which clearly bore Anderson's influence and were obviously bogus.[92] MacDonald later confessed to the Governor that Anderson had written the parts of his petition which libelled the Protector of slaves and the Attorney General.[93] The article concluded with a self-declaration by Anderson, who described himself as:

> Non-official **PROTECTOR OF THE OPPRESSED**, President of the Philo-Tropic Society, Member of the Free Agricultural Association, and Editor of The Colonial Observer.[94]

The problem in assessing Anderson's place in the liberal four centres on the question of motives. Loving, Scotland, Jordon and Osborn at this stage of their lives were all

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[90]Ibid. 30 April 1833.

[91]The Barbadian, 13 February 1833, 30 April 1834.

[92]The Colonial Observer, 4 December 1833, filed in C.O. 295/101, no. 11. See also Chapter 10 of Hodgson's Truths From The West Indies. The author used MacDonald's petition as the basis of this chapter.

[93]C.O.295/101, Hill to Stanley, 9 January 1834, no. 11.

[94]The Colonial Observer, 4 December 1833.

primarily motivated by political goals. This entailed a degree of honesty and personal sacrifice about their journalistic activities. Anderson put personal gain above political goals, but his editorship was designed to create the impression that his motives were purely humanitarian. Anderson appears to have published material supportive of the British Government in the hope of claiming a reciprocal gesture of support and patronage from the authorities.

Although Anderson's journalistic career does not compare in terms of altruism with the other liberal editors, the political impact of The Observer should not be underestimated. In fact, the overt effects of The Colonial Observer were in some ways greater than that of the Antiguan press. There was considerable white concern at Anderson's handling of race relations in the colony. The Governor and others thought Anderson was being deliberately divisive by emphasising the social inferiority of free coloureds. A popular view was that Anderson hoped to gain personally from the social discord that it was assumed would result from such topics appearing in the press. Anderson attempted to accredit himself with the unofficial leadership of the Trinidadian free coloureds:

> ... I became the open advocate... and the dauntless champion of that hitherto injured, but patient and loyal race, the free coloured inhabitants.[95]

Anderson also claimed that if he was in danger he had only to hold up his hand and a thousand free coloureds would rush to his protection. In answer to this self-aggrandizement, the Governor retorted:

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[95]C.O.295/98, Anderson to Stanley, 21 July 1833, enclosed with unnumbered despatch, 29 August 1833.

> He is without property and endeavours to exist upon the bounty of such of the free coloured class as may be cajoled by his portrait of their injuries and his advocacy of their rights.[96]

There are no signs that Anderson was referring to free coloureds of English, French, or Spanish descent, and there is no evidence that his claims were anything more than hyperbole. If Anderson's claims were true, then it would seem natural to assume that free coloureds formed the largest part of the circulation of The Colonial Observer. However, there is circumstantial evidence which points to Anderson being totally out of step with sections of the free coloured population. For example, crude anti-Catholic and xenophobic sentiments appeared in The Observer. In a colony where it was estimated that free coloured Catholics - most of whom must have been foreign - numbered over 12,500 this was a self-defeating editorial stance to adopt.[97] It meant the alienation of potential subscribers and advertisers, and The Observer's stance contrasts with that of The Port of Spain Gazette which made a point of printing material which flattered these groups. In October 1833, a ceremony was held in Port of Spain which was intended to raise funds for the completion of a new Catholic Church. British Governors had always maintained good relations with Catholics, and Sir George Hill was no exception. He attended the ceremony, which The Colonial Observer reported a few days after:

> Such a *mess* of humbug was, we venture to say, never before witnessed in any christian country, if that can be called a christian country where such

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[96]C.O.295/98, Hill to Stanley 29 August 1833, unnumbered despatch.

[97]C.O.295/88, Acting Governor Smith to Goderich, 1 October 1831, no. 120. The figures Smith gave were: free white Catholics, 2,766; free coloured Catholics, 12,675. Free white Protestants, 1,110; free coloured Protestants, 2,649.

> buffoonery and desecration can be permitted and tolerated. It being understood that all the "great guns" and "stars" of the place were engaged to assist *au spectacle*, - the *chairless*, not *bottomless*, pit, was filled at an early hour by the conscript *garcons boutiquiers* and several *foreigners* of high *rank* and *de-stinkshun*, all in their new salampore *shoppymentals*. The absence of several thousands of respectable persons, who formerly attended this fashionable place of *idle* amusement, can easily be accounted for. The orchestra, which was numerous and *select*, executed the *"Marseillaise Hymn"* and other revolution-ary airs with much effect; and the whole concluded with a *superbe et mag-nifique* **REQIUEM**...[98]

This provoked a petition of complaint from a group of Catholics to the Bishop of Olympus, Daniel MacDonnell, who forwarded it to Governor Hill. Possibly in response to this xenophobic side of The Observer, earlier historians allied the paper with the 'English Party' - colonists who, in the early decades of British rule, agitated for the introduction of English laws.[99] However, to the current writer the connection seems far from definite. Presumably, many of these colonists were slaveholders who opposed abolition. This would preclude a close connection with The Observer because of the paper's pro-abolition stance. Perhaps the safest way to assess Anderson is simply as an opportunist who used journalism in an attempt to further his personal ambitions. Rather than ideologically consistent newspapers, both The Royal Gazette and The Colonial Observer were political gadflies which irritated various elements of

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[98]The Colonial Observer, 23 October 1833, enclosed in C.O.295/99, no. 54.

[99]See L.M. Fraser, The History of Trinidad, 2 Vols. London 1971 (1st ed. 1891-1896), Vol. I. 265; Gertrude Carmichael, The History of The West Indian Islands of Trinidad And Tobago, London 1961. pp.163-164.

Trinidadian society without establishing a firm readership base amongst a particular ethnic group or political faction. Despite a lack of figures, there is no question that the circulation of both The Royal Gazette and The Observer was limited. In May 1832, the Chief Justice ordered that judicial printing be transferred from The Port of Spain Gazette to The Royal Gazette. When The Gazette was suppressed this work went to The Observer. A petition signed by eighty-one people was organised in protest at the original transfer. There were no political grounds for this; it was felt publicity for judicial business would be greatly curtailed, 'the great majority of the inhabitants not subscribing to The Royal Gazette.'[100]

This leaves the question of how the paper survived open to conjecture. Unlike The Antigua Free Press and The Weekly Register there are no signs that The Observer was known to the abolitionist movement, so the possibility of financial assistance from that quarter looks remote. The patronage of the Governor and his staff may have been critical, and there were certainly rumours that Anderson enjoyed official patronage from Governor Grant and others in the colonial Government. In June 1832, The Port of Spain Gazette spoke of Anderson's 'incog. [sic] masters', and a few weeks later the paper declared that George Ford, the Colonial Treasurer, and Governor Grant's nephew were the real power behind The Royal Gazette. Ford denied the allegation.[101] There is further evidence that others beside Anderson were involved in his newspapers. Governor Grant's successor, Sir George Hill, was under the impression that Anderson had enjoyed the protection of Government House, and Anderson

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[100]Address of Trinidadian colonists to George Scotland (Chief Justice of Trinidad, 1832 to 1849), 18 May 1832, re- printed in The Port of Spain Gazette, 30 May 1832. For proof of The Colonial Observer's limited circulation see C.O.295/99, Hill to Lefevre, 2 November 1833. no. 58.

[101]The Port of Spain Gazette, 27 June, 25 July, 18 August 1832.

himself admitted to being invited to write for The Royal Gazette, and then to establish The Observer by certain, presumably well-placed people in the colony.[102] The retention of executive patronage was probably essential if The Observer was to continue, but that said, Anderson did manage to continue publication for about six months after Hill withdrew this patronage.

The weak financial status of the paper obviously worked against The Observer putting its humanitarian politics into action. For example, the paper was forced to accept advertisements for slave runaways.[103] Ultimately, the obstacles to The Observer continuing as a paying concern proved too great. It was possible for a white man to conduct a newspaper that was totally opposed to the core beliefs which underpinned white society, as James Scotland had proved. However, in Anderson's case political isolation had led to financial pressures, and the two combined had almost certainly forced the closure of The Observer. In 1835 and 1836, Anderson seems to have been the solicitor for a group of Portuguese indentured servants who were seeking a return to their homeland. Nothing is known about him after this point.[104]

A fundamental point in the history of the British West Indian colonies was reached in 1833 when Parliament voted to abolish slavery. This was the culmination of events which had begun ten years previously when the British Government had

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[102]C.O.295/98, Hill to Stanley, 1 July 1833, no. 20; Anderson to Stanley, 21 July 1833, enclosed with unnumbered despatch, 29 August 1833.

[103]See the advertisements for the slaves Frances Wise and Pierre Charles in The Colonial Observer, 24 August, 23 October 1833.

[104]The biographical details in this section on the life of Young Anderson were compiled from several sources: Dobson, Scottish Settlers, Vol. VI, 104; C.O.295/98, Anderson to Stanley, 21 July 1833, enclosed with unnumbered despatch, 29 August 1833; Hodgson, Truths From The West Indies, pp.201-207; various issues of The Trinidad Guardian and The Port of Spain Gazette.

decided on a course of ameliorating conditions for the slaves. Only remnants of the liberal four remained to see the achievement of one of their political goals. By this time Henry Loving had left The Weekly Register, and The Colonial Observer had been closed for some months - the reactions of Loving and Young Anderson to abolition are unrecorded. Edward Jordon and Robert Osborn at The Watchman clearly felt apprenticeship was a hollow victory. They repeatedly argued against the scheme as dangerous and ill-conceived, and they could not hide their bitterness when the Jamaican Assembly decided to adopt it:

> We wash our hands clear of the matter, and look forward to the period when, we fear, we shall have cause to pity the infatuation, the love of power, or the avarice, which led our legislators and others to put off the final settlement of so momentous a question.[105]

The Antiguan Legislature voted not to introduce the apprenticeship scheme, and the colony was the first British territory in the region to completely abolish slavery. It was fitting that James Scotland Snr. was still editing The Free Press at this time; it enabled him able to savour the achievement of that for which he had campaigned. He greeted abolition with quiet triumph and a sense of self-validation:

> For our own part, we felt, that if it were possible and requisite, we could, for another such consummation, consent again to suffer the calumnies, persecution and poverty, which have been, (and still are in a pretty large measure), inflicted upon us, for pleading the cause of our oppressed brethren.[106]

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[105]The Watchman, 23 November 1833.

[106]The Antigua Free Press, 7 August 1834.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE PLANTER PRESS

The liberal four were politically conspicuous but the group was heavily outnumbered by those newspapers which helped to form and reflect the prevailing white consensus on fundamental principles underlying colonial society. To varying degrees these papers advocated the social, political, and economic priorities of whites. Questions about the readership of these papers are, therefore, unclouded by the political factors which involved the white-owned liberal press. Planter newspapers were intrinsically connected with white society because of the political compatibility between paper and reader. The planter press was supported by whites who relied on it for economic information and who used it as a forum for political discourse. This core readership was probably augmented by free coloureds who aspired to white status.

Planter newspapers expressed strong support for the basic structure of colonial society and in doing so they exhibited a general uniformity of political tone. This uniformity was enhanced by Imperial political pressures which built up in the 1820's. As the decade progressed the contents of the planter press came to be dominated by the consequences of Imperial decision making; events in Britain were the most important factors which moulded the planter press. Before this period, the political concerns of the planter press had tended to be narrower and more parochial. Although these concerns remained, planter newspapers assumed a politicised form that was clearly shaped by Imperial factors.

Imperial pressures caused most of white society to retreat into a kind of defensive square, a 'laager mentality' that manifested itself in various ways; obstruction in the colonial institutions, petitions to the King and Parliament, and an increasingly belligerent press which basically said the same things in different ways.

Acute political tensions in the colonies were reflected in the planter press. These tensions stemmed from the most critical colonial dilemma of the period - an irreconcilable conflict between the Imperial power seeking to enforce change, and her intransigent, semi-autonomous colonies attempting to resist. After 1830, every planter paper which I have looked at published editorials on subjects which were rooted in this dilemma. The subject matter varied of course - the violation of property rights, the invasion of legislative privileges, economic grievances - but when the planter press discussed these topics it unavoidably commented on a basic contradiction from which much else stemmed. A few examples of this will suffice.

In April 1834, by which time the colonies were gearing themselves for apprenticeship, The Grenada Chronicle mourned 'the remains of our venerable constitution.'[1] The Barbadian also articulated a resigned feeling of outrage that colonial representative government had been circumvented:

> Disgusting as the encroachment of the British Parliament is on our rights and interests, there yet seems to be a general opinion, as far as we are enabled to judge, that the Colonial Legislatures must succumb to the stronger power.[2]

The alleged supplanting of colonial rights by the British Government was repeatedly condemned by the press, although non-cooperation and open sabotage by the colonists of important legislation rendered the claim somewhat ridiculous. In August 1826, one of the St. Vincent papers observed that orders from the British Government to redraw slave codes were 'in breach of the Charter granted to the West India Legislatures to

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[1]The Grenada Chronicle, 12 April 1834.

[2]The Barbadian, 23 October 1833.

make laws for their own Government.'[3] In January 1827, The Dominica Chronicle applauded the Jamaican Assembly's resistance to what it termed 'foreign encroachment on its privileges.'[4] In March 1832, The St. Vincent Royal Gazette considered proposals by the British Government to confiscate to the Crown all slave children who had been moved from one colony to another since 1825. The paper described this as a 'base violation of vested rights.' The Gazette went on to decry 'the improper interference of Ministers with their [the colonies'] internal regulations.'[5] When news reached Grenada in February 1832 that the British Government had recommended the Legislative colonies adopt the Crown colony Order in Council, The Grenada Free Press was outraged:

> One feeling of disgust and indignation appears to pervade the whole West Indian community, at this unprincipled attempt on the part of his Majesty's Ministers to trample on the laws and constitutions under which the colonists have been induced to embark their property and hazard their lives.[6]

Similar views appeared in other planter papers. The Dominica Colonist printed a letter from 'A Planter' urging resistance to this 'attack upon private property.' The paper's editorial urged the colonists to make their voices heard to avoid 'certain ruin.'[7]

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[3]The Royal St. Vincent Gazette [it is unclear if this was The Gazette: By Authority, or The Weekly Advertiser], 21 August 1826, reprinted in The Trinidad Guardian, 5 September 1826.

[4]The Dominica Chronicle, 31 January 1827.

[5]The St. Vincent Royal Gazette, 23 February 1832, reprinted in The Barbadian, 7 March 1832.

[6]The Grenada Free Press, 29 February 1832.

[7]The Dominica Colonist, 11 February 1832, enclosed in C.O.71/74, MacGregor to Goderich, 25 February 1832, no. 34.

The supposedly ruinous consequences which would follow Imperial encroachment on colonial rights was a dominant theme in the planter press. The Barbados Globe spoke of the British Government committing 'spoilation and robbery' against the colonies, and some papers nicknamed the Abolition Bill the Bill of 'spoilation.'[8] The curtailing of colonial rights was seen as highly dangerous because the British Government was ignorant of local conditions. To some planter papers the major slave revolts in Demerara and Jamaica which occurred in this period were the result of the interference of the British Government. In 1823, The Barbados Mercury blamed the British Government for the Demeraran revolt as did The Barbadian. Almost a decade later The Barbadian declared the Jamaican revolt was:

> ... fairly attributable to the unprecedented and unconstitutional interference of the Government with the rights of the proprietors.[9]

According to this line of thought, attempts by the Government to legislate for the colonies were certain to fail because they were imposed from a position of ignorance; slave revolts were graphic proof of the dangers of such a policy.

The strain between Imperial and colonial authority was arguably less pronounced in the Crown colonies where there was no tradition of local representative Government and therefore no local power centres where opposition could crystallise. These colonies were more firmly held in check than the Legislative colonies. This is not to say that planter opposition did not exist in the Crown colonies; it did, often in

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[8]See The Barbados Globe, 27 May 1833; The Barbadian, 6 November 1833; The Grenada Gazette [probably The Grenada Chronicle], 19 October 1833, reprinted in The Barbadian, 9 November 1833; The Grenada Chronicle, 24 May 1834.

[9]The Barbados Mercury, 30 August 1823; The Barbadian, 10 September 1823, 18 July 1832.

extreme forms, but it was weakened because it was not focused through an Assembly.[10] It is striking that in Trinidad and Demerara, where there were prominent political newspapers, which to some extent substituted for an Assembly, only the editor of The Trinidad Guardian seems to have made gaining a constitutional structure analogous to the older colonies part of the general credo of his paper. The subject of colonial autonomy was a theme which regularly appeared in the paper's columns. There were numerous complaints about direct Crown rule, and the occasional outright demand for an elected Legislature.[11] In August 1830, The Guardian felt that some kind of change was imminent:

> The illegal, unconstitutional, and unrighteous policy so long and so unwisely persevered in, of governing British subjects by foreign laws and the most despotic systems, is at length beginning, like many other evils, to work its own cure. Ministers are evidently perplexed and thwarted in all their ecclesiastical and legal improvements by this chaos of misrule, particularly in the latter.[12]

In fact the paper was mistaken, and no changes were introduced. When a Legislative Council was proposed The Guardian remained unenthusiastic, arguing that this concession did not go far enough.[13]

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[10]For example, in early 1832 St. Lucian colonists closed down their businesses for nine days in protest at the November Order in Council. See L.J. Ragatz, The Fall of The Planter Class in The British Caribbean 1763-1833: A Study in Social And Economic History, New York 1928, p.442.

[11]The Trinidad Guardian, 24 February 1829. For other articles on the subject of Legislative Government see also, 7 April 1826, 22 May 1827, 15 January 1828, 25 September 1829, 24 September 1830, and 16 September 1831.

[12]Ibid. 10 August 1830.

[13]Ibid. 3 May 1831.

In contrast to The Trinidad Guardian, The Port of Spain Gazette did not place a comparable degree of importance on restructuring the colony's constitutional relationship with Britain. Despite identifying the causes of the colony's decline as 'oppressive impositions and unjustifiable interference in the scared right of property', The Gazette only once called for a campaign to secure an elected Legislature for Trinidad.[14] This seems inexplicable given that the paper's editor, Andrew Drinan, appeared to advocate such changes elsewhere. In late 1832 Drinan wrote two long letters to the Colonial Office about the state of Trinidad; in the first of these Drinan pressed for an elected Legislature.[15] In early 1833 Drinan gave a speech at a dinner given in honour of James McQueen. Drinan said:

> I have only further to remind you of the deplorable condition of the island you now reside on, where you have no Legislative Assembly to control your enormous expenditure; or regulate your overwhelming taxation; no trial by jury; no guarantee that you can depend upon for either life or property...[16]

In Demerara there is no indication in extant copies of The Guiana Chronicle that the paper saw constitutional reform as a critical issue, although the paper did refer to it in a general sense in August 1822.[17] In the case of The Chronicle an explanation for its apparent lack of interest may lie in the convoluted system of indirect elections to pre-British institutions which had been retained after the Dutch ceded the colony. By the standards of the time these gave a semblance of electoral control over the colony's

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[14]The Port of Spain Gazette, 4 January 1832, 3 May 1833.

[15]Ibid. 6, 30 November 1832.

[16]Speech given by Andrew Drinan, printed in The Port of Spain Gazette, 15 January 1833.

[17]The Guiana Chronicle, 5 August 1822.

affairs. In August 1820, six hundred and twenty-four electors chose the seven candidates who were to sit on the Court of Kaizers and Financial Representatives, a body which then elected members to the Legislative Court of Policy.[18] It is also the case that during the early 1820's - the period for which copies of The Guiana Chronicle have survived - the popular focus was on the issue of judicial corruption rather than political reform. The Guiana Chronicle may have raised the question of political reform after the judicial issue had been resolved, but the evidence is lacking.

Along with biting criticism of the British Government's encroachment on colonial rights, there were certain other stock topics which filled the pages of the planter press. Foremost among these were the vituperation and sarcasm reserved for abolitionists and missionaries, the 'saints.' Throughout this period there was a constant stream of virulent criticism directed against abolitionists. The Port of Spain Gazette denounced 'the Saintly tribe in Aldermanbury', while The Trinidad Guardian maintained that the aim of the abolitionists was the robbery and ruin of the colonists.[19] To The Guiana Chronicle they were 'a swarm of insects' and 'hoary hypocrites.'[20] In 1819, The Chronicle asked:

> ... are we tamely to sit down and see the principles of anarchy and rebellion parading our streets, before our eyes, in the garb of religious hypocrisy, and impudently figuring upon the *very scene* of their calumnious aspersions?[21]

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[18]Ibid. 6 August 1821. The number of electors compares very favourably with the electorate in other colonies.

[19]The Port of Spain Gazette, 9 May 1832; The Trinidad Guardian, 1 September 1829.

[20]The Guiana Chronicle, 11 January 1819.

[21]Ibid. 8 February 1819.

These sentiments were not merely editorial rhetoric. In 1823, the proprietor of The Chronicle testified as a witness in the court martial of the missionary John Smith.[22] Other planter papers regarded missionaries with equal hostility. The Antigua Free Press attacked them as 'wolves in sheep's clothing, who cloak themselves under the garb of religion to veil their iniquity.'[23] The Barbados Globe referred to Jamaican Baptists as 'canting hypocrites.'[24] In the immediate aftermath of the 1832 Jamaican revolt, The Jamaica Courant openly called for Baptist missionaries to be shot, and for Methodists to be lynched in the woods of St. James's and Trelawny.[25] The Grenada Free Press was quick to ascribe the blame for the revolt to:

> ... a set of vipers who have insinuated themselves into the colonies, and who, under the direction of the inhuman and relentless party of Anti-Colonists at home, are indefatigable in their exertions to overturn the state of society in these islands, and to render them one scene of desolation and ruin.[26]

A year after the Jamaican revolt The Port of Spain Gazette remarked on a missionary, who had been accused of helping to incite the rebellion, returning to work on Nevis. The paper advised the colonists to 'reward him according to his deserts.'[27] The Barbadian cleared the Wesleyans of any blame for the revolt, but said of the Baptists that 'it is too probable, that the missionaries of such a society are sent out with other

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[22]C.O.111/42, The Court Martial of John Smith. Testimony of Alexander Stevenson, 24 October 1823, p.135.

[23]The Antigua Free Press, 22 August 1828.

[24]The Barbados Globe, 23 February 1829.

[25]The Jamaica Courant, undated, quoted in Philip Wright, Knibb 'the Notorious' Slaves' Missionary 1803-1845, London 1973, pp.93-94.

[26]The Grenada Free Press, 14 March 1832.

[27]The Port of Spain Gazette, 23 February 1833.

instructions than those of religious conversion.'[28] For missionaries working in the colonies there was always the possibility that this printed abuse could become physical violence. The destruction of a Methodist Chapel in Barbados in October 1823, the death of John Smith in a Demeraran jail cell in February 1824, and the rough treatment of missionaries after the Jamaican slave revolt were ready proof of the physical dangers they faced.

By the early 1830's, papers such as The Grenada Free Press, The Barbadian, and The Trinidad Guardian viewed abolition as inevitable if a reforming Whig Ministry was able to maintain power.[29] The Grenada Free Press described the Whig Ministry as 'another term for the head of the Anti-Colonial faction',[30] while The Barbadian, equally strident in its opposition to the Whigs, stated:

> A Reformed Parliament, which some of our contemporaries so much desire, in other words, a revolutionised House of Commons, would deprive us of all shadow of representation, and BUXTON, MACAULEY & CO. would soon ride rough-shod over the colonies. A pure, unmixed *Tory* Ministry, we say for ever.[31]

The 'contemporaries' referred to by The Barbadian were presumably the liberal papers. The view that the British Government was susceptible to the influence of abolitionists had of course been a feature of the planter press throughout the 1820's. In the aftermath of the Demeraran revolt The Jamaica Journal warned the British Gov-

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[28]The Barbadian, 21 March 1832.

[29]The Grenada Free Press, 4 April, 4 July, 15 August 1832; The Trinidad Guardian, 7 January 1831.

[30]The Grenada Free Press, 29 February 1832.

[31]The Barbadian, 16 June 1832.

ernment never again to listen to 'the visions of the fanatic, or the schemes of the designing.'[32] In November 1826, The Trinidad Guardian remarked on opposition to the 1823 Order in Council in the colonies to which it had been introduced. It concluded that Ministers should 'give attention to other Councils than those by which they have been too long guided...'[33] As the British Government moved further towards abolishing slavery, claims that it had fallen under 'the fatal influence of the Anti-Slavery Faction' became more explicit.[34] In early 1831, The Grenada Chronicle noted that 'the leaders of the Saints and our most active enemies have the direction of the mighty engine of Government', and later, The Grenada Free Press described a combination of 'the hypocritical Saints, and their agents, the Ministry.'[35] The Trinidad Guardian spoke of:

> The crude and ill-advised intermeddlings of canting philanthropists in the government and regulations of countries and their inhabitants of which they are profoundly ignorant...[36]

All of the men who held the post of Secretary of State for the Colonies in the period under study naturally came in for much personal criticism. Earl Bathurst, The Guiana Chronicle said, was 'as arch a dissimulator as any among the whole posse of Saints.'[37] To The Trinidad Guardian, Bathurst was the 'worst enemy' of the colonies,

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[32]The Jamaica Journal, 27 September 1823.

[33]The Trinidad Guardian, 28 November 1826.

[34]The Barbadian, 7 March 1832.

[35]The Grenada Chronicle, 8 January 1831, reprinted in The Trinidad Guardian, 21 January 1831; The Grenada Free Press, 12 September 1832.

[36]The Trinidad Guardian, 27 May 1831.

[37]The Guiana Chronicle, 13 February 1824, reprinted in The Barbadian, 28 February 1824.

while Sir George Murray's first despatch proved he was controlled by abolitionists.[38] The Barbadian had viewed Lord Goderich as 'deeply pledged to the Anti-Slavery Society', and welcomed the appointment of E. G. Stanley as his successor. Initial approval soon turned to condemnation of Stanley's 'gross inconsistency', although on the eve of abolition the paper changed its view again and paid Stanley a generous tribute.[39] In May 1833, The Barbados Globe stated its belief that changes of Ministry and Minister had made no difference to the plight of the colonies:

> From the time of EARL BATHURST'S misrule, to the present, we have been so *fortunate* as to have had transitions from Tory to Whig, and all the intermediate grades of politicians embraced from either extreme - and all have proved the same, with trifling deviations in secondary details.[40]

Along with the vitriol aimed at the Secretary of State, there was much criticism of James Stephen. It was common knowledge that Stephen exercised a great deal of influence at the Colonial Office, and the planter press responded predictably. Stephen was 'a deep and dangerous schemer', using 'duplicity and cunning' to deceive his political masters.[41]

This brief discussion gives some indication of the general uniformity of political tone in the planter press when it addressed some of the external forces shaping the colonial situation. In contrast, there were major differences in the recommendations that newspapers made as to how to combat the perceived problems.

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[38]The Trinidad Guardian, 3 July 1827, 19 December 1828.

[39]The Barbadian, 4 May, 26 June 1833, 9 July 1834.

[40]The Barbados Globe, 6 May 1833.

[41]The Barbadian, 25 May 1833; The Trinidad Guardian, 11 July 1828.

All agreed that colonial unity and action were essential if success was to be attained in resisting the British Government, but few were specific about what form of concerted action could be organised.[42] The nearest the colonists came to co-ordinated action was in March 1831 when a colonial Congress was held in Barbados with a view to presenting a united statement of West Indian grievances. Ten of the colonies (including the Virgin Islands), sent delegates to this Congress, but apart from passing a series of resolutions nothing seems to have come from it.[43] Several papers were highly critical of the lack of West Indian unanimity and of the pervasive apathy which they felt was gripping the colonists. The Barbados Globe spoke of 'the unaccountable apathy for which the West Indian colonists ever have been distinguished.'[44] The Grenada Free Press felt that apathy was one of the chief causes of the crises in colonial affairs:

> ... as on all other occasions where their [colonists] exertions have been required in their own defence, to be lulled in that lethargic apathy and insensibility to the dangers of their situation, which has been the chief cause of the continued triumph of the anti-colonial party.[45]

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[42]See for example, The Guiana Chronicle, 25 January 1822, which published the prospectus for a London-based colonial paper to be called The Sentinel. It was needed because of 'the absence of all co-operation among the great proprietors'; The St. Vincent Royal Gazette, 21 August 1826, reprinted in The Trinidad Guardian, 5 September 1826; The Barbados Globe, 2 July 1829; The Trinidad Guardian, 22 October 1830; The Grenada Free Press, 29 June 1831, reprinted in The Trinidad Guardian, 15 July 1831; The St. Vincent Royal Gazette, 23 February 1832, reprinted in The Barbadian, 7 March 1832; The Port of Spain Gazette, 11 January 1833; The Barbados Globe, 29 April 1833.

[43]Ragatz, Fall of The Planter Class, p.440. For contemporary reports on the Congress see The Trinidad Guardian, 25 February, 1 March 1831; The Port of Spain Gazette, 23 March 1831; The Guiana Chronicle, 24 June 1831.

[44]The Barbados Globe, 29 April 1833.

[45]The Grenada Free Press, 11 July 1832.

Colonial unity, sending delegates to Britain and so forth could only take the colonists up to a certain point in the defence of their society. Such actions fell a long way short of facing up to the grave consequences to which unflinching colonial resistance might lead. If the colonists chose uncompromisingly to resist the prerogative of the British Government there was the likelihood of a violent confrontation between themselves and the parent state. Many newspapers were aware of this dimension to the abolition crisis but not all were prepared to state it. In 1826, The Dominica Chronicle, one of the less politically strident of the planter papers, said of a debate in the House of Lords:

> ... we think it must be obvious that to force the colonies to pass laws for bettering the condition of their slaves, is the least feasible method of getting these laws duly observed.[46]

The Chronicle only hinted at outright defiance as a means of facing the crises in West Indian affairs. This option found its most extreme expression in rumours from Jamaica in 1832. These rumours suggested that the proprietors of The Jamaica Courant and Augustus Beaumont (who had been editor of the paper), were negotiating with agents from the United States over the possibility of Jamaica seceding from the British Empire. The Governor was asked to investigate the rumours, but they were never substantiated.[47] The ultimate step of seceding from the Empire was also advocated by The Grenada Free Press in an editorial from June 1831:

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[46]The Dominica Chronicle, 26 April 1826.

[47]C.O.137/183, Constantine Henry Phipps, Earl Mulgrave (Governor of Jamaica, 1832 to 1834), to Goderich, 16 December 1832, private and confidential.

> We ought, therefore, in whatever shape we address our remonstrances to Government, respectfully, but firmly to *demand Justice* at its hand, and if that be refused to us - to *demand* that *our country will annul those mutual obligations which have been broken by her but never by us - and allow us to seek protection where we can find it.*[48]

There is no evidence that Alexander McCombie was involved in any private negotiations with agents of foreign powers, and in this instance he appeared to be merely engaging in editorial rhetoric. Other papers also contemplated the possibility of a violent confrontation. At different times The Barbados Globe, The Barbados Mercury, and The Trinidad Guardian all stated that violent resistance was an option.[49] Again, there is a feeling that this was merely editorial rhetoric. This was understandable given the acute tension of the period, and the fact that rhetoric was regularly used by the newspapers of the period as a form of political provocation.

There were other, less dramatic recommendations made by the planter press. The Barbadian - a paper renowned for its High Anglican Tory views - decried notions of violent resistance and advised the colonists to put their trust in God.[50] The Trinidad Guardian, as well as discussing armed revolt, advocated the constant petitioning of the British Government and House of Commons.[51] Other ideas for stopping abolition included establishing the colonies as constituencies and electing members to the British Parliament, and a boycott; a complete refusal to send any West

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[48]The Grenada Free Press, 22 June 1832, reprinted in The Trinidad Guardian, 8 July 1831.

[49]The Barbados Globe, 1 July 1833. For evidence of The Mercury's attitude see The Antigua Free Press, 11 July 1833. See also The Trinidad Guardian, 17 July 1829.

[50]The Barbadian, 6 April, 24 August 1833.

[51]The Trinidad Guardian, 5 August 1828.

Indian produce to Britain that was advocated as early as September 1827 by The Trinidad Guardian.[52]

Planter papers continued to print political editorials despite the powerlessness of their position; their's was a splenetic but impotent rage. Eventually, it became clear that short of taking up arms there was no form of resistance which could stop abolition. This produced a sense of deep despondency in some. In June 1831, Alexander McCombie wrote in The Grenada Free Press, 'no hope now remains for us in evading the utter ruin which the Government is determined to inflict, but by our own active and determined exertions.'[53] McCombie was well aware that the chances of such organised resistance were minimal. John Shoel of The Trinidad Guardian, was so pessimistic about the chances of the colonies coping with abolition that he gave five months notice of his intention to close the paper and then emigrate.[54] At one point during the paper's winding-down period, Shoel expressed complete despair at the inability of the colonial press to lead the way in organising an effective defense; he noted that one editor was publishing irrelevant material and articles critical of McQueen, while another was professing loyalty to the country that was sending the colonies to ruin.[55]

Although planter papers attempted to preserve the fundamental shape of slave-based communities, at various times prior to abolition they were forced to confront one aspect of the plurality of West Indian society - the political position of free

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[52]See The Port of Spain Gazette, 22 June 1831; The Trinidad Guardian, 21 September 1827. The Guardian repeated its call on 4 September 1829.

[53]The Grenada Free Press, 22 June 1831, reprinted in The Trinidad Guardian, 8 July 1831.

[54]The Trinidad Guardian, 28 June 1831.

[55]Ibid. 16 August 1831.

coloureds. The struggle of free coloureds to achieve political and civil rights was undertaken with similar levels of intensity in different colonies, but success was achieved at various times.[56] In a sense planter newspapers were in a difficult position with regard to the free coloureds. The editors of the planter press could not contravene the code of racial behaviour which condemned free coloureds as inferior to whites. Yet if they expressed crude hostility to free coloured aspirations they ran the risk of alienating individual subscribers and losing any advertising revenue which was received from that class. This delicate position was reflected in the editorial columns of some papers. For example, although Robert Priest sarcastically taunted The Weekly Register in the late 1820's and Alexander McCombie baited The Grenada Chronicle throughout 1832, neither men used explicitly racist language. Some planter papers cut through the dilemma by maintaining their opposition to free coloured rights, while at the same time claiming that they had no intrinsic hostility to the free coloureds as a class. In December 1822, the Lt. Governor of Berbice, Henry Beard, awarded commissions in the colonial militia to three free coloureds. This prompted mass resignations from the militia, and widespread opposition which was formally presented in a petition to the King. Probably out of concern at what was happening, the free coloureds themselves asked Beard to revoke their commissions. The Guiana Chronicle described the men as prosperous and 'deserving and respectable individuals *in their own way, and in their own proper condition of society.*' [my italics] The paper compounded this indirect condemnation by adding:

> Money is said to level all distinctions - but this saying is true only to a limited extent in this part of the world. Our political situation, the tenure by which we

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[56]See Wesley, 'The Emancipation of The Free Coloured Population in The British Empire.'

> hold our dominion, and the different grades and castes of our population, imperiously require our moral and civil distinctions to be preserved from encroachment - so far at least as regards places of public trust and command.[57]

By 1828 The Guiana Chronicle had somewhat changed its opinions. It declared that the Antiguan Assembly's rejection of a free coloured petition asking for repeal of the White Servants Act was 'as impolitic as unjust.' The White Servants Act limited employment opportunities for free coloureds on plantations. The Chronicle claimed that Demeraran free coloureds had achieved equal respectability in economic terms as members of the planter class. The paper wrote:

> Self-respect has had its full influence; and under a liberal system, many, many of this class are worthy, orderly, educated, and refined...[58]

The apparent shift in The Chronicle's stance contrasts with the intransigence of The Antigua Free Press. The Free Press opposed repeal, declaring in August 1828 that 'the extirpation of the whites is the object of the present petition.' A week later the paper partially retracted this comment, insisting it had meant 'supplant' rather than 'extirpate'. Despite its opposition to the removal of a major legislative obstacle to free coloured advancement, The Free Press still claimed:

> ... we have no invidious feelings towards any class in the community; and have only opposed the petition of the free people of colour, upon a conviction that

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[57]For an account of these events see The Guiana Chronicle, 13, 16, 18, 20 December 1822.

[58]Ibid. 27 August 1828, reprinted in The Weekly Register, 30 September 1828.

> the repeal of the White Servants Act would be injurious to the welfare of the whole community.[59]

The issue of free coloured economic and political rights did not compare exactly in Antigua and Demerara. In Antigua, there was an Assembly but no available land for free coloureds on which they could build their wealth. In Demerara, there was available land but no accessible political institutions. Despite an electoral system (which by the franchise of 1812 gave taxpayers of 10,000 florins per annum and slave owners with twenty-five slaves the right to vote), free coloureds could not make a significant political impact in an Assembly. The Guiana Chronicle could therefore safely endorse economic free coloured rights secure in the knowledge that in Demerara this would never be translated into political power. Free coloured political activity presented a different challenge, and The Guiana Chronicle, in common with other planter papers remained uneasy about it. In late 1833 the free coloureds of Berbice presented a petition to the Governor protesting at the social inertia which continued to inhibit their advance - The Chronicle condemned this action.[60]

For the liberal four, free coloured rights were a central political tenet. However, certain planter papers also expressed the desire to see the enfranchisement of the free coloureds, or at least referred to them in favourable terms. In February 1832, The Grenada Free Press welcomed the passing of the Bill to relieve free coloured disabilities in that colony. The paper hoped this would finally remove 'all cause of that unhappy feeling, by which the good understanding and unity of interest which so long distinguished the different classes of this colony, has been for so many

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[59]The Antigua Free Press, 8, 15 August 1828.

[60]See a report in The Antigua Free Press, 28 November 1833.

months interrupted.'[61] The Trinidad Guardian publicly claimed that '*all free men* should be placed upon an equal footing' and also spoke of 'aspiring and laudably ambitious' free coloureds.[62]

In assessing supportive statements such as these from the planter press, two factors should be borne in mind. Firstly, the desirability of increasing the circulation might have prompted publication of material flattering to free coloureds. Although the subscriber list was not a paper's main source of profit, any additional subscribers would obviously have been welcomed. Secondly, there were a number of caveats - sometimes expressed, sometimes implied - about the possible consequences for whites of free coloureds developing political power. What emerges from these considerations is a palpable sense of equivocation; on the one hand praise about the respectability and talents of the free coloureds, and on the other, distinct unease about their potential power and any attempts to organise that potential. This sense of unease about free coloured advancement manifested itself in different ways. In 1831, The Trinidad Guardian published an editorial that commented on remarks made in Parliament by Stephen Lushington. Lushington had apparently stated that Jamaican free coloureds would voluntarily manumit their slaves if instructed to do so. He had also implied that free coloureds would take up arms to support the troops of the line if Jamaican whites resisted the orders of the Mother Country. Lushington, The Guardian said, had:

> ... published a gross and abominable libel upon the free coloured population... He knows little of the character of the people he has thus scandalously traduced, or of the ties that bind them to the whites... they have been their

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[61]The Grenada Free Press, 1 February 1832.

[62]The Trinidad Guardian, 4 March 1831, 13 August 1830.

> playfellows in infancy, - their masters during apprenticeship, - their employers and supporters when qualified to gain their living by their industry, and their commanding officers on parade. That there are Escoffries, Lecesnes and Jordans [sic] in the colonies there is no doubt, but they are too few and too insignificant for the sanctified Doctor to build his vile and bloodthirsty hopes upon.[63]

The equivocal nature of this statement is clear. Firstly, there is the generous endorsement of the loyalty of free coloureds and their presumed attachment to the structure of colonial society. This is followed by condemnation of free coloureds such as Louis Escoffrey, Edward Lecesne, and Edward Jordon who actively campaigned for the interests of their class.[64] This was not the only example of free coloured equivocation towards the free coloureds on the part of The Guardian. In August 1830, the paper had commented favourably on the Secretary of State's intention of appointing free coloureds to official positions in Sierra Leone. The Guardian advised free coloureds to further their ambitions by emigrating to Africa, which would then of course remove the possibility of them ever achieving any degree of success in Trinidad.

A striking illustration of the gulf between a newspaper pronouncing confidence in the free coloureds and its evident unease at their political activity occurred in

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[63]Ibid. 27 May 1831.

[64]Louis Escoffery and Edward Lecesne were Jamaican free coloureds whose origins lay in St. Domingue. Their families had fled to Jamaica at the time of the revolution, and by the 1820's both men were involved in free coloured political activity. The organisation of a free coloured petition in 1823 was used by the Assembly and the Governor as a pretext for deporting both men on 28 November 1823. The Colonial Office eventually ruled in Escoffery and Lecesne's favour, granting them several thousand pounds each in compensation. They returned to Jamaica in 1830. See Heuman, Between Black And White, Chapter 3.

October 1832 when The Barbadian became involved in a feud with Henry Loving. Loving had stopped in Barbados on his way from England to Antigua in August 1832, and had been honoured with a dinner given by thirty-six free coloureds and free blacks. Loving later claimed in The Weekly Register that nothing had been said of this event in the press because all three Barbadian papers were under the control of the 'indescribables' of the island. Loving maintained that the people giving the dinner had assured him that if they submitted a report of the event to the press it would have been refused publication. The Barbadian responded to this by saying that it alone of the Barbadian papers had always strenuously supported free coloured claims to political and civil rights. However, this was not true; in 1824, The Barbadian had strongly condemned nascent free coloured political activity.[65] Along with its disingenuous claim about support for free coloured rights, The Barbadian made condemnatory remarks about Loving's political campaigning with The Register. Abel Clinckett clearly felt a sense of ambivalence towards a free coloured who was politically active and who refused to tailor his activism to meet white approval:

> For the last year or two, we have paid but little attention to The Register, in consequence of the Editor having indulged in much intemperate and inflammatory language on the subject of political disabilities of his class, (now happily removed by an act of the Legislature) as well as in the many disrespectful remarks on the native white population of this island.[66]

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[65]The Barbadian, 2 March 1824.

[66]Ibid. 6 October 1832.

This dispute continued for some weeks, culminating in Loving writing a letter to Clinckett. This was an effective critique of Clinckett's equivocal position. At one point Loving wrote:

> Sir, I never did, nor shall I now, permit you or any other man in your circle, to be the judge of what was, or was not, "intemperate language" unless the case of my class was that of yours... I was undeserving the station I hold in society, and the confidence of my brethren, had I adopted the cure of their political wrongs to the standard of your opinion, or the opinions of others who were in the enjoyment of the very privileges which constituted the point in dispute.[67]

Loving also pointed out that Clinckett's claim to have always supported the Barbadian free coloureds was quite probably founded in economic acumen and in the need - rather than the desire - to appeal to that class. Loving concluded his forcibly written and virtually unanswerable letter by refuting Abel Clinckett's claims that he had some kind of instinctive rapport with Barbadian free coloureds:

> ... I beg to assure you that you know nothing of the private opinions of these people on any subject; nor are you ever likely to know them while the "arrogance" of Barbadian pride continues to fix an insuperable barrier between your class and mine in the blessings of social life.[68]

Another incident in Barbados further underlined racial tensions, when in May 1833 a meeting of free coloureds was called in Bridgetown under the chairmanship of

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[67]Henry Loving to Abel Clinckett, 29 October 1832, reprinted in The Barbadian, 14 November 1832.

[68]Ibid.

Samuel Prescod. The meeting had been called to send an official protest to the Governor at the social inertia of free coloureds, who despite the concession of civil rights in 1831, had achieved very little practical progress towards equality with whites. The Barbadian reacted with evident unease to this assertion of free coloured interest.[69]

The Port of Spain Gazette provides a further example of the contradiction between stated confidence in the free coloureds and underlying racial tension. In April 1831, The Gazette approved of several colonies removing legal discrimination against free coloureds.[70] Yet the paper was alarmed at any sign of Trinidadian free coloureds politically organising, as shown by events involving The Colonial Observer. The Gazette was alarmed despite the fact that The Observer's claims about leading the free coloured population were almost certainly exaggerated. The Gazette stated:

> ... what can *justify* the attempt to renew old differences, tear open wounds now nearly healed, and promote mistrust, discord, and unkindness between parties so nearly allied in blood, and whose political interests, and private feelings ought to be, and in fact of late have been, *the same*.[71]

On the one hand, the paper claimed that the gulf between whites and free coloureds in Trinidad had been virtually eliminated; but on the other, the fear of racial tension reemerging because of the activities of The Observer is evident. The tension felt by the proprietors and editor of The Port of Spain Gazette may have been compounded because of the French origins of the majority of free coloureds, and fears about their

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[69]The Barbadian, 22 May 1833.

[70]The Port of Spain Gazette, 30 April 1831.

[71]Ibid. 20 November 1832.

loyalty to the British Crown. Analyses of race relations by planter newspapers were informed by their role as supporting prop to the white elite. Therefore, their claims to support free coloureds must be viewed with scepticism. Such claims seem to have stemmed more from a desire to gain new subscribers, and to assuage white fears over security matters by building up the loyalties of free coloureds. These loyalties could then be used during times of conflict with the slaves. It was these factors, rather than any genuine commitment to equality between whites and free coloureds which prompted planter papers to try and reach across the colour divide.

For the planter press abolition was traumatic, but acceptance of the inevitable came at different times. The financial compensation which was offered by the British Government does not seem to have softened the blow for some papers. Compensation in the event of abolition was an idea that had been circulating in the colonies since the mid-1820's at least.[72] Prior to the announcement in April 1833 of a figure of £20 million sterling, compensation had been the subject of numerous, sometimes wildly inaccurate reports. The Trinidad Guardian felt that a sum of £150-200 million would be needed to satisfy the claims of white slaveowners alone.[73] Its contemporary, The Port of Spain Gazette, demanded that compensation should cover entire plantations rather than just the slaves.[74] The Grenada Free Press was convinced that the alliance between abolitionists and the Ministry was seeking to avoid paying any compensation to the planters.[75] The agreed sum was not enough for some newspapers. The Grenada

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[72]See The Trinidad Guardian, 10 March 1826.

[73]Ibid. 3 September 1830.

[74]The Port of Spain Gazette, 9 June 1830.

[75]The Grenada Free Press, 12 September 1832.

Chronicle described the compensation as 'miserable and misnamed'; The Barbadian thought it inadequate; while The Barbados Globe continued to advocate armed resistance as late as July 1833.[76]

Other papers were more favourably disposed towards the final settlement, although this may have been because the political struggle had proved so wearisome. The St. Vincent Royal Gazette seemed to have accepted abolition by May 1833, when it counselled the slaves to be patient while the measure was finalised.[77] The West Indian, established in Barbados in November 1833, welcomed compensation and saw no point in advocating any other course of action than acceptance as 'the best and only means of attaining a satisfactory result.'[78] Diehard planter papers followed. The Grenada Free Press, which had at one stage called for the colonies to secede from the Empire, accepted the futility of further resistance by November 1833, although it could not resist another barbed comment against colonial apathy:

> ... to us it appears that the period for remonstrance, opposition and resistance, has passed away almost unnoted by those whom it concerned, and that nothing remains for us to do, but to make the best of what is left to us.[79]

When news reached Trinidad of the proposed measure for emancipation The Port of Spain Gazette denounced its 'hideous deformity.' Less than a year later, its outspokenness tamed by internal Trinidadian battles, The Gazette accepted abolition

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[76]The Grenada Chronicle, 3 May 1834; The Barbadian, 9 July 1834; The Barbados Globe, 1 July 1833.

[77]The St. Vincent Royal Gazette, 30 May 1833, reprinted in The Barbados Globe, 1 July 1833.

[78]The West Indian, 2 December 1833. Samuel Hyde, the proprietor, admitted that up to this point he had been opposed to abolition.

[79]The Grenada Free Press, 13 November 1833, reprinted in The West Indian, 5 December 1833.

'because it is now become the law of the land, and our self-interest calls for obedience to it.'[80] By April 1833 The Barbadian had started to make consistent calls for abolition to be finally settled in some way. However, when news reached the colony of the form emancipation was to take the paper was horrified at the 'appalling measure.'[81] The following month when official details arrived in the colony, The Barbadian's opposition seemed to harden:

> The more attentively one reads this monstrous bill, the more the heart sickens at the melancholy prospect which it presents to the already deeply injured and insulted colonists. It bears the very stamp and impress of despotism. It is a perfect exemplification of might prevailing over right - of strength trampling upon weakness.[82]

Despite following this editorial with others which predicted the complete destruction of Britain and the Empire, The Barbadian accepted the need 'to extract good out of evil' on 14 September. However, the paper advocated one last gesture of defiance. On 23 November 1833, the paper advised the Barbadian Legislature to submit a petition of protest to the British Government; not opposing the abolition of slavery, but protesting about the way the measure had been imposed.

In November 1833, The Barbadian considered the idea of an immediate transition to freedom, but dismissed the idea as dangerous.[83] Several months later the

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[80]The Port of Spain Gazette, 28 June 1833, 15 April 1834.

[81]The Barbadian, 10 July 1833.

[82]Ibid. 28 August 1833.

[83]Ibid. 27 November 1833.

paper criticised Antiguan colonists for their rejection of the apprenticeship scheme.[84] The contrast between The Barbadian's caution and the enthusiasm with which The Antigua Herald embraced complete freedom was pronounced. The Herald, with its masthead proclaiming **SHIPS, COLONIES, AND COMMERCE**, had been vociferous in its support of the planter cause when it first appeared in January 1832. The Herald had been established by a consortium of proprietors expressly as a political counterweight to the island's dominant liberal press. It appears to have maintained its pro-slavery editorial line for about a year, but around January 1833 the paper began to change for reasons which are uncertain.[85] The move away from its hardline political position culminated in July 1833 when it declared:

> ... Masters in this island at least, think that the freedom had better be early, simple and unrestricted, and feel convinced, that everything will soon find its own level.[86]

This was deemed irresponsible by some of the paper's owners who called a meeting on 2 August to discuss Thomas Warner's position as editor. Warner had apparently already taken to looking for other employment, but he survived the meeting and continued to edit The Herald, probably until after abolition. The Herald condemned the apprenticeship system outright on 26 October 1833, and in March 1834, claimed:

> ... universal freedom is not only possible and advantageous, but a far more healthy, secure, and beneficial state than its general precursor personal thraldom. But a country cultivated and carried on for any time, on the system

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[84]Ibid. 5 March 1834.

[85]See a report in The Antigua Free Press, 17 January 1833.

[86]The Antigua Herald, 20 July 1833, reprinted in The Antigua Free Press, 8 August 1833.

> of temporary, compulsory, and involuntary apprenticeship for the whole labouring population, is a political absurdity, an invention so ridiculous that its originator never could have expected it to be adopted.[87]

Of course, this self-congratulatory tone is deceptive; the Antiguan planters had a captive workforce in the sense that short of emigrating the former slaves had nowhere to go for employment but back to the plantations. Avoiding apprenticeship was a calculated move by the Antiguan planters; they avoided the financial impositions of the system while at the same time claiming £425,547 in compensation.[88]

Thus, the various planter papers which had for so long campaigned against the abolition of slavery, were forced to accept the abolition of slavery, the pre-eminence of the British Government's prerogative, and the subjugated position of the colonies within the Empire. With the benefit of hindsight The Barbadian saw the unequal nature of the political struggle that had lasted for a decade, and it accepted the inevitability of the outcome:

> The prejudice against the West India Colonies, solely on account of the slave system, nothing could conquer. It is now clear that no Ministry could have longer resisted the overwhelming impulse of public opinion. Whether right or wrong in the means, the end was inevitably to be accomplished, the abolition of colonial slavery.[89]

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[87]The Antigua Herald, 1 March 1834.

[88]Burns, History of The British West Indies, p.629.

[89]The Barbadian, 26 February 1834.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE PRESS, THE LEGISLATURE AND THE JUDICIARY

Several notable conflicts between colonial newspapers and West Indian legislatures or judiciaries occurred in the period of this study. The widespread extent of disputes involving newspapers from across the political spectrum is an indication that the colonial authorities struggled to come to terms with a burgeoning political press. Superficially, there are numerous parallels between the various incidents which involved the press in these colonies. There were a number of prosecutions for libel, fines were imposed, and sometimes the proprietors and editors were imprisoned. In the Legislative colonies, newspapers which were a political or social nuisance were dealt with in the same way as their counterparts were in Britain; through the law. As roughly the same legal procedures were in place throughout the Legislative colonies, similarities in this respect inevitably existed. The constitutional structures of the Crown colonies placed them on a different footing which will be considered later, although in these colonies the press was also dealt with on occasion through the law.

In the Legislative colonies, as in Britain at this time, the principle of subsequent censure instead of prior censorship applied to the press.[1] There does not appear to have been a tradition of resorting to outright repression in the sense that European Governments dealt with newspapers. In the British colonies press transgressions of the law resulted in a trial, and obviously if a guilty verdict was returned, a fine or imprisonment followed. Such incidents were common. Newspaper proprietors and editors who were imprisoned in this period were Matthew Gallagher of The Trinidad Courant, who spent seventy-two days in jail; Michael Ryan of The

[1]Wickwar, Struggle For Freedom of The Press, p.15.

Barbados Globe, six days; William Stewart of The Dominica Chronicle, eighty-three days; Robert Priest of The Antigua Free Press, forty-six days, and then for a second period of less than a week; James Scotland Snr., also of The Free Press, was sentenced to six months, but spent about half that time in jail; like Scotland, Edward Jordon of The Watchman, was sentenced to six months, and he too spent less time in jail; Henry Mills and William Stewart of The Port of Spain Gazette, endured a six month sentence; and Samuel Cable of The St. Kitts Advertiser, who was sentenced to three months, but released after one. In comparison to the severe sentences which were handed out to editors of British papers at this time, West Indian editors and proprietors escaped quite lightly. No West Indian editor suffered periods in jail comparable to Richard Carlile, who because of his activities editing The Republican and other British political journals, spent a total of nine years and four months in prison in the 1820's and 1830's.[2] However, despite the relative leniency of sentences handed down to West Indian editors, the punishing rigours of a spell in a West Indian jail cell should not be underestimated.

The fines which were imposed on editors were also light (in both apparent and real terms), when compared to some of the crushing financial blows that were inflicted on British editors. The colonists set local exchange rates at a higher value than sterling; thus, in real terms fines in local currency were considerably lighter compared to fines in sterling imposed on editors in Britain.[3] For example, in 1819 Carlile was

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[2]Ibid. pp.82-96, 205-245, 292-298. Also Dictionary of National Biography, Oxford 1973, Vol. III, 1,009-1,012.

[3]Comparisons between West Indian currency and sterling are complicated by the number of foreign coins in circulation in the colonies. Although the British Government attempted to fix the value of currency by occasional proclamations, these were ignored by the colonists. See C.O.76/15, Dominica Blue Book, 1825, which gives £100 stg. equal to £250 currency; C.O. 10/15, Antigua Blue Book, 1831, £100 stg. to £225-£234; C.O. 258/27, St. Lucia Blue Book, 1831, £100 stg. to £240; C.O. 106/26, Grenada Blue Book, 1832, £100 stg. to £250. However, Carmichael, History of Trinidad And Tobago,

fined £1,000 for publishing The Age of Reason and £500 for publishing The Principles of Nature. He also had to give security for future good behaviour, himself in £1,000 and two others in £100 each.[4] The heaviest fine imposed on West Indian pressmen was the £1,200 currency damages awarded in May 1833 to the Chief Justice of Trinidad against Henry Mills, William Stewart, and Andrew Drinan of The Port of Spain Gazette.[5] This burden was shouldered by Mills and Stewart alone, as Drinan secretly left Trinidad to avoid paying his share.[6] Mills and Stewart were unable to pay the damages, and with the whole of their printing establishment and circulating library fetching only £162 at auction, they were imprisoned in the debtors' cell in Port of Spain.[7] However, because of the currency differentials, the £1,200 fine against the men involved with The Port of Spain Gazette was actually equal to £480 sterling.[8] In 1810, Matthew Gallagher of The Trinidad Courant was fined $200 for an offence which the Chief Oidor of the colony claimed was punishable by a fine of up to $736.[9] In 1822, £500 currency damages were awarded to Symonds Bridgwater, Dominican

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pp.412-413, states that on average £100 stg. was equal to £150 colonial currency, and Curtin Two Jamaicas, p.235 n. 27, states that £100 stg. was equal to £140.

[4]Wickwar, Struggle For The Freedom of The Press, p.95.

[5]The Port of Spain Gazette, 21 May 1833. The three men were also faced with the costs of proceedings - an unknown sum.

[6]Ibid. 31 May 1833.

[7]Mills and Stewart had valued their printing establishment at £3,500. See The Port of Spain Gazette, 26 July 1833.

[8]Fraser, History of Trinidad, Vol. II, 335.

[9]C.O.295/24, Pamphlet entitled Letters And Other Documents Relative to The Imprisonment And Discharge of Matthew Gallagher, Printer And Proprietor of The Trinidad Courant, 1810. Published by George Smith (Chief Oidor of Trinidad, 1809 to 1811), and included with Smith to Right Honble. Cecil Jenkinson (Under Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, November 1809 to June 1810), 13 May 1810.

Collector of Customs, and plaintiff in a libel case against The Dominica Chronicle.[10] In April 1829, Robert Priest was fined £250 currency for libelling the Antiguan Chief Justice, and two years later James Scotland Snr. had to give securities to keep the peace for two years, himself in £100 currency and two others in £50 each.[11] Samuel Cable suffered a £200 currency fine, and also had to find two securities for £100 each.[12] The lightest fine that has been found was imposed in 1810; £25 against Thomas Howe, then editor of The St. Kitts Gazette.[13] Light fines may have been the result of the relative poverty of some colonial proprietors. Judges might have felt it was pointless to hand out sentences for which it was known the defendants did not have the wherewithal to pay. Thus, despite operating in a political atmosphere which acknowledged freedom of publication, court actions were an ever-present possibility for colonial editors. These actions were, however, seemingly aimed more at preventing alleged newspaper indiscretion rather than causing outright financial ruin.

Along with these superficial similarities there were some key themes which often emerge as being of central importance in understanding conflicts involving the press. The presence of flourishing political newspapers is an indication of some degree of maturity in the political development of white colonial society. However, the instability of the relationship between the press and colonial authorities in this period

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[10]C.O.71/63, Nicolay to Bathurst, 12 February 1825, no. 41. This despatch was primarily concerned with a different matter, but it contains much information on Bridgwater Vs. Stewart.

[11]The Antigua Free Press, 10 July 1829 and 27 October 1831.

[12]C.O.239/40, Samuel Cable's petition to President Crooke administering the Government of St. Kitts, enclosed with no. 205.

[13]Ragatz, Fall of The Planter Class, p.400; See also Burns, British West Indies, p.602, n. 4. Howe had printed resolutions passed by the Nevis Assembly condemning the excessive punishment of slaves by a planter, Edward Huggins.

is indicative of the limits of that development. By the 1820's the editors of colonial newspapers appear to have developed a keen awareness of their political role. The resilience of several editors in the face of official intimidation shows the strong sense of their self-belief, and perhaps also indicates that they had supportive core readerships. However, the pull of the press in one direction was to some extent countered by the repressive tendencies of the colonial Governments pulling the opposite way. These tendencies never took the form of outright suppression, but there was an obvious bias in that direction. Many of the tensions involving the press that characterised this period grew out of different political perspectives. On the one hand freedom to publish was accepted, but on the other many officials in local Government clearly had difficulty in coming to terms with the implications of that freedom. This may have been the result of the inferior 'quality' of whites who, because of absenteeism, monopolised local power. The adverse effects of absenteeism on the social character of white society has been remarked on by other scholars.[14] For the press, the practical effects were to sharpen conflicts with officials who were, for example, often completely untrained in legal matters and were unable to accept criticism of their decisions.

Although conflicts flared up between newspapers and the different arms of colonial Government, the most important issue throughout was often the same - the disputed usage of political power. Economic and political power was concentrated in the upper layer of the white elite, and these class divisions helped to generate tensions

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[14]See Ragatz, Fall of The Planter Class, Chapter 1; Orlando Patterson, The Sociology of Slavery: An Analysis of The Origins, Development, And Structure of Negro Slave Society in Jamaica, London 1967, pp.38-43; Cox, Free Coloreds of St. Kitts And Grenada, p.17. Cox contends that this analysis needs to be re-evaluated.

which are important factors in understanding press disputes. The tensions generated by an unequal distribution of white power provide a broad thematic interpretation for clashes between the white-owned press and colonial Governments. However, the tenor of press disputes with the authorities underwent a distinct change towards the end of the 1820's. This change stemmed from two linked sets of circumstances; the approach of abolition, and the appearance of newspapers owned by politically self-confident free coloureds or sympathetic to their cause. These factors underpinned a shift of emphasis in the role of the press which occurred in the late 1820's. The shift was not definitive, but around 1830, press conflicts became informed by the politics of abolition and colour; a political framework that was shaped largely by Imperial factors which had been lacking before the mid-1820's. Prior to this point conflicts involving the press had been narrower and more parochial, a manifestation of tensions solely within the white class.

White society was not monolithic.[15] The simple fact of being white conferred a wide set of racially-based privileges, but it did not remove class distinctions. Life for a resident proprietor or an attorney with several estates under his control was very different from that of a bookkeeper. The white colonial class structure had created an oligarchy, the admittance to which was limited by legal disqualification and social exclusion. This situation caused tension between those whites who were part of the oligarchy and rival factions or individuals who were excluded from it. The oligarchical power structure itself was not stress-free. Tensions often emerged between different loci of colonial power, and a number of splits emerged running along Imperial-

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[15]William Green in his essay 'The Creolization of Caribbean History: The Emancipation Era And A Critique of Dialectical Analysis,' Journal of Imperial And Commonwealth History 14, 3, 1985-1986, warns against the dangers of discussing colonial society in terms of homogeneous blocs.

colonial lines, with Crown appointees facing opposition from colonists. Thus, although the phase of press conflict which occurred in the first twenty-five years of the nineteenth century did have an Imperial dimension, compared to those events which occurred in the period immediately preceding abolition it was mainly rooted in local circumstances.

Press conflicts which were part of larger clashes over the distribution and application of white power occurred in Trinidad, Demerara, Dominica, Barbados, and Antigua. Trinidad was unique; no other territory had undergone a comparable political, economic, and social evolution. Given the colony's degree of demographic complexity and the particular problems the territory posed for British administration, ambiguities in the definition and application of power were bound to arise. In the early years of British rule the direction Trinidad's political development was to take was still unclear. This sense of constitutional uncertainty was exacerbated by poor relations between the various men who administered the colony. Among the most difficult of professional relationships which impaired efficient administration was that between the Chief Oidor George Smith, and Governor Thomas Hislop. The Trinidad Courant, the second British newspaper in the colony, helped to provoke a deterioration in the relationship between Smith and Hislop.[16] The role of The Courant was, therefore, similar to that played by British newspapers on many occasions before; that of minor but persistent irritant. The Courant nagged away at a colonial official and in the process helped to precipitate a conflict between the two highest authorities in the

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[16]These events are discussed by Fraser, History of Trinidad, Vol. I, 322-331; Carmichael, History of Trinidad And Tobago, pp.86-93. The first British newspaper was The Trinidad Weekly Courant, founded in 1796, although there is some confusion over who was responsible. In her discussion of printing in Trinidad, pp.369-370, Carmichael says a Thomas Gallagher founded the paper before moving to Caracas sometime in the late 1790's. Cave, 'Early Printing,' p.174 notes a Matthew Gallagher as having worked in Dominica, Grenada, Trinidad, and then Caracas.

colony. The antagonism between The Trinidad Courant and the Chief Oidor which led to Matthew Gallagher's imprisonment was one small part in a larger process by which the distribution of power between the various offices of Government in the colony evolved. This process included General Thomas Picton's dictatorship after the island had been conquered for the last time; agitation for the introduction of English Laws and an English Constitution; the rejection of those demands; and occasional tinkerings with the constitutional and judicial systems by the British Government.[17] The political scope during all of this was racially narrow, dictated by white influences and white considerations. Although the free coloureds as a class were relevant in that they were incorporated into the political decisions made at the Colonial Office, there was no active engagement in political activity on their part.

By imprisoning Gallagher in Hislop's absence the Chief Oidor exceeded his official authority relative to the Governor's power. In early 1810, Governor Hislop left Trinidad to visit Guadeloupe, leaving the colony under the control of Smith and Colonel Henry Tolley. Hislop's departure coincided with an increase in meetings held by colonists demanding the introduction of English Laws and an English constitution into the colony. These demands had been periodically made since the Spanish had ceded the colony in 1802. Those demanding this legal and constitutional innovation were dubbed the 'English Party.'[18] Their earlier agitation to secure constitutional change had met with considerable hostility, but by 1810 the English Party was

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[17]For an account of these aspects of the colony's history see Brereton, History of Modern Trinidad, Chapters 3 and 4.

[18]For references to the 'English Party', see Fraser, History of Trinidad; Carmichael, History of Trinidad And Tobago; and James Millete, The Genesis of Crown Colony Government: Trinidad 1783-1810, Port of Spain 1970. Millete refers to them as the 'British Party.'

working in a different and more favourable atmosphere.[19] Tolley and Smith, however, thought that at that time the social fabric of Trinidad was too weak to allow such political activity, and they decided it was necessary to curb the English Party.[20] One of the ways of doing this was to prevent The Trinidad Courant from firstly publicising the meetings organised by the party, and then printing the resolutions which were passed. Smith was convinced that The Courant was being used by the English Party for their own political ends. His views cannot be confirmed because only isolated copies of The Courant have survived. Those which I have looked at do not contain editorial columns which bear close comparison to those which emerged in the press in the 1820's. However, if Smith was correct, then The Courant is an early example of a West Indian newspaper being used for an explicitly political purpose. This was ironic given that Trinidad was a recent addition to the British Empire, with no tradition of political newspapers, apart from an early Spanish paper, La Gazeta.

Tolley and Smith summoned Matthew Gallagher and the other editor who worked in the colony, John Johnston of The Independent Trinidad Gazette. Johnston and Gallagher were verbally forbidden to print any more resolutions, but both men refused to comply with the order. Tolley and Smith then demanded to see each printer's license, at the same time fining Gallagher $200 for reprinting a particular article he had been censured for publishing in the first place. Neither men had the requisite license to print a newspaper. Johnston petitioned Tolley for a license that was free from restrictions on the discussion of the question of English Laws. Johnston was

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[19]Millete, Crown Colony Government, p.241.

[20]C.O.295/24, Acting Governor Henry Tolley and George Smith to Lord Liverpool (Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, November 1809 to June 1812), 28 February 1810. This letter, and its accompanying documents, are filed rather confusingly; they cover pp.128-138 of this volume.

again informed that he was free to print his paper, but only provided he did not discuss that particular issue. Johnston agreed to this, and asked that he be allowed to inform his subscribers why he was not allowed to publish articles relating to the question of English Laws. Tolley and Smith themselves wrote Johnston an explanatory notice for publication, but Johnston rejected it as unacceptable. Instead of printing it, Johnston chose to close The Gazette, and wait for Governor Hislop's decision on his return to the colony.

Matthew Gallagher refused to accept any limitations at all on what he could publish, and Tolley and Smith claimed that he deliberately stepped up his defiance of their authority. On 19 February, an order was issued to the Provost Marshal to suppress The Trinidad Courant but Gallagher refused to give up his property, threatening to resist with force if necessary. Gallagher was then forcibly taken to Tolley and Smith where he repeated his views - his summary imprisonment followed. Smith was convinced that Gallagher was 'the miserable tool of a faction',[21] and his correspondence makes it clear that he thought he was simply trying to control the press because the political instability of the colony demanded it. Smith was convinced that any sort of British innovation - an elected Legislature or tolerance of a free press - was completely unsuited to a territory such as Trinidad.[22] Smith felt the rigorous enforcement of Spanish law was the only means by which the colony could be governed, and this made provision for the censorship of the press. Gallagher presented the issues from the standpoint of an editor fighting to conduct a free press. His public

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[21]Ibid. Smith to [illegible], 8 April 1810.

[22]Ibid. Smith to Jenkinson, 13 May 1810.

statement in The Courant made it clear he saw it as a clash between the freedom of the press and arbitrary Government:

> In our restoration from our late solitary abode, to the enjoyment of civil liberty; to the liberty of the press generally; and, particularly to the printing and publishing of our Weekly Courant, without its being subject to a controul [sic] of a *Censor*, we, with gratitude acknowledge, and shall ever remember the benevolent interference of His Excellency Governor **HISLOP**, on the occasion of our late imprisonment;- and, we trust, our Subcribers, and the Public in general, will be satisfied with what we now offer to them, as an apology for the *judicial* silence so long imposed upon us.[23]

This conflict, ostensibly between a newspaper representing a political faction demanding English laws, and a Crown appointee resolutely refusing to countenance such reform, was both an impulse for, and a symptom of a deeper conflict. Although Gallagher's incarceration can be considered as quite trivial, it is important because it revealed differences between the Governor of Trinidad and the Chief Oidor. Important questions were raised about the ambit of each official's political power, which up until this point had been the subject of confusion. Smith had been allowed to write his own Commission and Instructions; a freedom which resulted in his assumption of wide-ranging powers.[24] This virtually ensured that the boundaries between executive and judicial power would be disputed by each official.

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[23]The Trinidad Weekly Courant And Commercial Gazette, 12 May 1810. Enclosed with C.O.295/24, Smith to Jenkinson, 13 May 1810.

[24]Millete, Crown Colony Government, pp.230-234.

Hislop returned to Trinidad on 21 March 1810. However, Gallagher's release from prison was not immediate, and he remained in jail until 1 May. Hislop's first thought was to grant John Johnston the right to publish The Independent Trinidad Gazette. This was not a political decision, but a pragmatic choice made because of the importance of the press for circulating commercial information. Gallagher petitioned Hislop for his release and also asked for permission to recommence publishing The Trinidad Courant. Hislop still refused to intervene directly, but forwarded the petition to Smith with a recommendation that it be granted. Smith was reluctant to release Gallagher but relented. Hislop then granted permission for Gallagher to recommence publishing The Trinidad Courant, apparently without consulting Smith. The paper then proceeded to publish further personal attacks on Smith. Hislop and Smith disagreed about the measures needed to deal with this. Smith felt that Hislop had given implicit protection to Gallagher and that The Courant was taking advantage of this to denigrate the office of Chief Oidor. On one occasion Hislop claimed he did not see any offence in the article which Smith was complaining about.[25] This seemingly calculated gesture of indifference was repeated at other times.[26]

The power struggle which took place between Hislop and Smith seems to have been more keenly felt by the latter. Smith argued that the Governor's independent decision to allow publication of the paper meant that if in future he decided to prosecute Gallagher, a formal clash between the two offices was inevitable.[27] At one

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[25]C.O.295/23, Hislop to Smith, 11 June 1810, enclosed with no. 9.

[26]Millete, Crown Colony Government, p.259.

[27]C.O.295/24, Smith to Jenkinson, 13 May 1810.

point Smith demanded a statement from the British Government defining the extent of his powers:

> Should my conduct hitherto so far meet the approbation of the Earl of Liverpool as to induce His Lordship to continue to me his protection [sic], the only way in which, it seems to me, these jarring elements can be reconciled, is to declare my authority, what it is by law, extending over every case connected with the department of justice including all cases of police, which certainly come within the description of criminal causes, and over which in its judicial department the Spanish Audiencia has paramount controul [sic] and to declare that so the same shall for the future be construed to be notwithstanding any instructions therefore acted on by the Governor.[28]

Smith clearly saw The Courant's provocation in terms of tension between his office and that of the Governor's. Gallagher's paper flourished because of the differences of opinion which existed between the two men. These had led to political uncertainties which in turn had created space in which the newspaper could avoid the censorial aspects of Spanish law. The disagreement between Hislop and Smith gathered momentum with Smith being forced to withdraw from his seat on the colony's Council on 22 June 1810. He returned to his position on 9 September, but he never regained the political initiative.[29] By this time, Governor Hislop had become converted to the idea of introducing British laws and the two men settled at completely opposite political poles. The situation eventually became untenable and it

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[28]Ibid.

[29]Millete, Crown Colony Government, pp.259-260.

culminated with Smith secretly leaving Trinidad in April 1811. Smith never returned; he was later posted to Ceylon where he committed suicide.

Despite appearing of central importance, Gallagher and The Courant were only one part of the power struggle between the executive and the head of the judiciary. In fact, all of these events were subsumed within the wider constitutional struggle that was going on over the question of British Laws. Smith, weighing the political instability of the colony in early 1810, accorded the press a degree of importance which he felt warranted censorship. His views on the importance of the press do bear some scrutiny. In a colony without a political forum in which dissenting opinions could be expressed, The Courant inevitably achieved prominence as one of the few means of carrying on political discourse. The newspaper and the public meeting were the most important forms of political activity in the colony at this time. The institutional vacuum accorded The Trinidad Courant a degree of importance and centrality during these events which it otherwise would not have had. At a time when newspapers were highly personalised vehicles for political debate, the corollary to this was that Matthew Gallagher became a well-known figure in Trinidad. His imprisonment was condemned by important sections of white political opinion. Following Smith's suspension Hislop forwarded a number of documents to the Colonial Office justifying the decision. Among these documents were the minutes of the Board of Cabildo citing the outrage which was generally felt in the colony at Gallagher's incarceration.[30]

Acute tension between colonial officials, stemming from different views on the extent of power which each office carried, was also critically apparent in Demerara in 1820. There are a number of broad similarities between Demerara in 1820 and

[30]C.O.295/26, Minutes of Cabildo Meeting, 12 March 1811, enclosed with no. 62.

Trinidad ten years previously. Both were Crown colonies where the British had inherited traditions of foreign law and government which were often imperfectly understood. In such an atmosphere of relative ignorance, different views on the range of power carried by official positions were likely. In Trinidad this had occurred in the form of conflict between the Governor and the Chief Oidor; in Demerara it came in the shape of conflict between the Governor, the First Fiscal, many colonists, and the President of the judiciary. Apart from the Court of Policy Demerara had no institution or forum in which this dispute could take place.[31] This is an important point of comparison with Trinidad; there is very much a sense that The Trinidad Courant and The Guiana Chronicle to some extent filled the opposition void. It is probably overstating the case to say that both papers were an unofficial opposition, as the public meeting and the printing of its resolutions were also important forms of political activity. However, the press did provide a constant and public stimulus to exacerbating tension between officers of the Crown. In the case of Demerara the press was also primarily responsible for creating the tension in the first place. The Guiana Chronicle was clearly an agent of provocation and sustainment, but its role in resolving the consequent disputes is less evident.

The origins of the Demeraran affair lay in dissatisfaction with the conduct of Court President William Rough. Rough was accused, together with other judicial officials of impropriety regarding fees charged in court cases. Letters critical of Rough started to appear in The Guiana Chronicle in July 1820, although it seems Rough had

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[31]A Dutch institution retained after the colony was ceded. It was composed of four Officials and four Unofficials. The latter were elected by a body called the Kaizers, itself elected by the colonists. Burns, History of The British West Indies, pp.608-609.

acted questionably on the subject of fees since he had arrived in the colony in 1816.[32] On 19 July 1820 Alexander Stevenson, the proprietor of The Chronicle, received a verbal warning from the Governor, Sir John Murray, about the tone of this correspondence, but he ignored the warning. Further letters (many of which were written under the pseudonyms *A Plain Planter* and *A Rough Planter*), continued to appear in The Chronicle, and in early August President Rough complained about them to Governor Murray. The Governor then instructed the First Fiscal, Victor Heyliger, to take appropriate action.[33] On 15 August, Stevenson was served with notice that he was arraigned to appear in Court on 29 August. On that day a request was made to postpone the hearing until 1 October, because Stevenson's Counsel was ill. The request was agreed. On 30 August, Stevenson published a letter signed *Sydney*, and from that point on events assumed a different form. The publication of this letter in The Guiana Chronicle precipitated a dispute between the Court President and the First Fiscal over who was subordinate to whom. From this situation there developed a clash between Rough and Lt. Governor Murray over an alleged lack of executive support for the President.

The letter from *Sydney* made a fierce personal attack on Rough, accusing him of corruption in office.[34] This letter was considered at a meeting of the Court of Criminal and Civil Justice on 5 September, and Heyliger was issued with an order to immediately apprehend and incarcerate Stevenson. Heyliger refused to carry the order

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[32]C.O.111/30, Sir John Murray (Lt. Governor of Berbice, 1812; Lt. Governor of Demerara-Essequibo, 1813 to 1824), to Bathurst, 13 October 1820, no. 172.

[33]C.O.111/34, Victor Heyliger (Demeraran First Fiscal), report to Murray on the incident, 15 March 1821. Enclosed with no. 188.

[34]The Guiana Chronicle, 30 August 1820.

out, not out of sympathy with Stevenson's position as a journalist, but because he felt that the order was illegal. Heyliger was convinced that the office of First Fiscal was in no way subordinate to the Courts of Justice, and that therefore he was under no obligation to carry out their instructions.[35] There followed a lengthy period of virtual paralysis in the Demeraran judicial system, as neither Rough nor Heyliger moved from their chosen positions. Lt. Governor Murray refused to act decisively, which eventually incurred accusations from Rough that he was part of a conspiracy to remove him from office.[36] The stalemate lasted until 6 October 1821 when Rough was suspended from office.

Throughout this period the immediate cause of the conflict - Stevenson's publication of the letter from *Sydney* - was virtually forgotten. However, Rough continually complained about what he alleged was The Chronicle's abuse of the freedom of the press, and in this way the paper helped to sustain the momentum of the controversy.[37] Although the paper was quickly relegated to a supporting role, in September 1820 the point at issue was very much The Chronicle's freedom to pass critical comments on colonial officials. The Court of Justice saw the problem in terms of decaying executive control over the press, which had led to a situation in which a letter as scurrilous as that from *Sydney* could be published:

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[35]C.O.111/30, Heyliger's first petition to Murray, 30 September 1820. Enclosed with no. 172.

[36]C.O.111/35, William Rough (President of the Demeraran Judiciary, 1816 to 1821) to Henry Goulburn (Under Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, August 1812 to December 1821), 4 February 1821, p.37. There are two volumes of President Rough's letters to Goulburn; they are not indexed and are filed rather confusingly. I have therefore included the page number.

[37]See for example, C.O.111/32, Rough to Bathurst, 23 December 1820, p.390; C.O.111/35, Rough to Murray, 22 January 1821, pp.10-11; Rough to Murray 22 May 1821, p.214.

> We are very far however from blaming your Excellency for having conceded full liberty to the press; but then the more instantly devolves upon us, the Court of Justice, the necessity of controuling [sic] its excesses, when it errs.[38]

This view, although expressed in a memorial to Murray from the Court of Justice, was probably the work of Rough. From his voluminous letters to Henry Goulburn, and from the minutes of the Court of Justice, Rough appears as a strong and domineering character.

Later events were to prove the Court's view substantially correct; there had been a degeneration in the controls which the executive exercised over the press. The result was a formidably aggressive newspaper, which to some extent compensated the colony for its lack of British political institutions. Rough himself, felt that The Guiana Chronicle more than compensated the colony in this respect. He claimed that the colony was 'under the despotic rule of an uncontrouled [sic] press.'[39] This was an exaggeration. The Chronicle's alleged abuse of the freedom of the press was an issue which came to critical prominence in Demeraran politics after the 1823 slave revolt. In 1820 and 1821, it was the financial conduct of President Rough, and the relationship of power between the Governor, the Courts of Justice and the First Fiscal that was at issue. The Chronicle had found itself at the forefront of political events because there was no Assembly in the colony in which an opposition could make itself heard. The paper thereby assumed a high political profile by default. The judicial logjam was eventually broken by Rough's removal from office, but the case of Heyliger Vs. Stevenson did not come to Court until 21 January 1822 - almost fifteen

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[38]C.O.111/30, undated memorial of grievances against the First Fiscal, enclosed with no. 172.

[39]Ibid. Rough to Murray, 19 September 1820.

months after Stevenson had been originally summoned. The verdict was delivered on 26 January, but for some reason The Chronicle never printed it. The verdict has not been found in any other source.

What had started as a familiar dispute between a figure in authority angered by press criticism and a newspaper proprietor became something of far greater importance; a struggle to demarcate the lines of judicial power. The paralysis that followed was so great that compromise proved impossible, and a high-ranking official was removed from office. The parallels with Trinidad are numerous. In both colonies there was confusion over the boundaries of official authority, and a clash occurred when disagreements arose; the press helped to precipitate the crises, and acted as an opposition medium; at one point the press itself appeared as the central issue, and the editors were prosecuted; the problem was only finally resolved by the removal from office of one of the parties involved.

The critical issue underlying these two cases reappeared in Dominica in 1824 and 1825. However, in this colony the clash took a different form. In Trinidad and Demerara the officials involved were all Crown appointees. In Dominica there was a shift of emphasis because of Dominica's status as a Legislative colony. The conflict which arose involved a Crown appointee and the Dominican Assembly. A certain number of differences between Trinidad, Demerara, and Dominica were inevitable because of this fact. The Assembly had the effect of weakening the role of the press. A comparison between these three examples highlights some of the essential differences between the position of newspapers that were published in Crown colonies, and those which were printed in Legislative colonies. In the former, where the British Government had a firmer hold on political developments, the press had the potential

to develop into a potent force, provided it could escape the controls of Government. In the latter the practical power of the press was sapped by the institutions of representative Government; to some extent an Assembly that was in session rendered the political stimulus of a newspaper less effective.

In Dominica the Chief Justice of the colony came into conflict with a hostile group of colonists who controlled local power in the Assembly and used it to try and secure his dismissal. This incident was an example of the gulf that sometimes developed between Crown appointees and colonists who had arrogated local power for themselves. As with Trinidad and Demerara the conflict became so bitter that there was no room for compromise; a resolution was only achieved by the Chief Justice's death on 3 July 1825.[40] The Dominican Chief Justice at this time was Archibald Gloster. He had been involved in controversy since his arrival in the colony in 1812. Gloster himself admitted passing severe sentences, including some against men who by the mid-1820's were members of the Assembly. At his first sitting on the Dominican Bench, Gloster sent fourteen of the island's Grand Jury to jail for 'contumacy and insolence', and fined them £50 each.[41] In November 1824, long-standing tension between Gloster and the Assembly turned into overt conflict as certain members attempted to remove him from office. A member called Charles Hobson laid three charges against Gloster before the Assembly. The first accused him of unacceptable professional conduct in having decided on several motions in the libel case of Bridgwater Vs. Stewart. The second charge made a similar accusation of professional misconduct in a separate libel case. The third charge was:

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[40]C.O.71/63, Nicolay to Bathurst, 3 July 1825, no. 61.

[41]Ibid. Offices And Individuals. Gloster to Bathurst, 8 March 1825.

> For conduct derogatory to the character of a Judge, the said Chief Justice being the editor of a newspaper, and an avowed writer and contributor to that paper.[42]

For his part, Gloster refused to recognise that the enquiry launched by the Assembly had any legal validity at all, and he declined to attend any of the investigative sessions.[43] At the root of the conflict were grievances about the extent and application of Gloster's judicial powers. Thus, this situation, although different to Trinidad and Demerara, had substantial points in common. From the point of view of certain Assemblymen the issue at stake was the misapplication of judicial power - the same complaint which lay behind dissatisfaction with Smith and Rough.

The role of the Dominican press in these events was markedly different to the politically-charged newspapers of Trinidad and Demerara. The overall weaker position of The Dominica Chronicle was compounded by the fact that William Stewart's paper was unavoidably dragged into this conflict. The Chronicle's involvement was inadvertent and stemmed from two facts. Firstly, Gloster had extended his patronage to Stewart since his arrival in the colony in early 1813 - Stewart also had connections with the Gloster family which predated 1813. This had left Stewart with a certain obligation for a reciprocal gesture during a difficult period for Gloster. The second reason for The Chronicle's involvement was of course, the fact that one of the charges laid against Gloster was that he edited The Chronicle. It was therefore inevitable that Stewart would have to answer questions from the House. On 15 and 16 November 1824, Stewart was called to the Bar as a witness to aid the investigation against

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[42]C.O.74/16, Journals of the Dominica Assembly, 1824-1825, 11 November 1824.

[43]C.O.7/63. Offices And Individuals. Gloster's reply to the Assembly's charges, 8 March 1825.

Gloster. For fear of incriminating himself Stewart refused to answer certain questions connected with the libel case from 1822 which had cost him £500.[44] He was then committed to jail for contempt of the House. The Roseau common jail was apparently in such a dilapidated state that the jailer, out of concern for Stewart's health, put him in his own house in the jail yard. Two days later the Provost Marshal ruled that Stewart be moved back to his original jail cell. On 7 December, Stewart submitted medical certificates to the Assembly claiming that the jail was a serious threat to his health. This was intended to win his release, or at least his removal to a place in better condition. The request was initially refused, but on 10 December the Assembly agreed that Stewart should be returned to the jailer's house to finish his sentence.[45] Stewart had petitioned the Governor, Sir William Nicolay, in an effort to win his freedom, but to no effect. The Governor did not intervene - he claimed to have no knowledge of the details of the case and merely passed Stewart's petition onto the Colonial Office.[46] Nicolay seemed to have no general interest in these events, despite the gravity of the charges against Gloster, especially the impropriety of a senior Government official editing a newspaper. On 4 February 1825, three days before he was finally released, Stewart also petitioned the Secretary of State, but obviously this was sent too late to shorten the sentence he had endured.[47]

The Chronicle and its proprietor were largely marginalised participants in this conflict - they did not even have the superficial appearance of a central role as did

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[44]The Dominica Chronicle, 2 March 1825.

[45]C.O.74/16, Journals of the Dominica Assembly, 1824-1825, 7 and 10 December 1824.

[46]C.O.71/61, Stewart to Nicolay, 6 December 1824, enclosed with no. 27.

[47]C.O.7/63, Offices And Individuals, Stewart to Bathurst, 4 February 1825. This petition does not appear to have been sent through the Governor.

Gallagher in Trinidad and Stevenson in Demerara. Far more than in those colonies the Dominican press in this dispute was merely peripheral to a larger conflict between competing centres of colonial power. The Dominica Chronicle had not acted as a catalyst for events in the way that The Courant and The Guiana Chronicle had done. Unlike those two papers, surviving issues of The Dominica Chronicle give no sign that it was an aggressive political newspaper campaigning for an identifiable group, although at least three members of the Assembly seem to have been supportive of it. These three men - William, Henry, and Charles Glanville - formed a small faction in the Assembly which was supportive of Gloster as well as The Dominica Chronicle.[48] Following Stewart's incarceration the paper did adopt a more strident political tone, but nothing which compared to the aggression of The Guiana Chronicle.[49] The Dominica Chronicle did not function as a surrogate opposition to the Assembly, or as a rallying point for opposition sentiment. Indeed there seems to be no evidence that Gloster enjoyed any significant level of public support in the colony which The Chronicle could have spearheaded. In fact, although Governor Nicolay felt that there was widespread dissatisfaction in the colony with Gloster, there is no indication that this dispute had a popular dimension outside the Assembly.[50] However, there can be little doubt that The Dominica Chronicle was generally perceived as the supporter of an unpopular official. The Assembly's charges against Gloster; its investigation against him; and the editorials published in The Chronicle's rival, The Dominica Reporter, would have helped to foster this impression. The Chronicle lacked the populist

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[48]See the minutes from various meetings of the Dominican House of Assembly, C.O.74/16, Journals of The House, 1824-1825.

[49]See for example, The Dominica Chronicle, 2 February 1825.

[50]C.O.71/63, Nicolay to Bathurst, 12 February 1825, no. 41.

element which had characterised The Trinidad Courant and The Guiana Chronicle. The paper's inadvertent association with Gloster gives a strong sense that Stewart was a hapless victim who simply got in the way of events and was overtaken by them. Unlike The Trinidad Courant and The Guiana Chronicle, which in the circumstances of the time appear to have been important factors shaping and directing widespread opposition to Smith and Rough, The Dominica Chronicle was at the mercy of events. It does not appear to have shaped them to any significant degree.

Following this persecution The Dominica Chronicle managed to survive for only a short period. In January 1825, the paper suffered three setbacks in quick succession, which must have weakened its ability to continue as a profitable concern. Firstly, it had to contend with the appearance of a rival paper in early January.[51] In a colony such as Dominica, where subscriber lists ran to hundreds rather than thousands, this was a serious challenge to a paper which for twelve years had enjoyed a monopoly as far as the pool of potential readers was concerned. The new paper, The Dominica Reporter, had the backing of several Assemblymen who provided financial assistance. The Reporter's first editor, James Dowdy, was an Assemblyman himself.[52] The Reporter was almost immediately caught up in the general feuding which as part of the Gloster affair seems to have gripped the Assembly. On 19 March 1825, Dowdy published an article which apparently implied that the Glanville family were of mixed racial origins. This was an old allegation that had resulted in a trial for slander in

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[51]Pactor, British Caribbean Newspapers, p.42. Pactor states that The Dominica Reporter lasted for only two issues. This is a mistake - it was still being published in September 1825, when John Finlay took over from James Dowdy as editor and printer to the Legislature. However, The Reporter probably became The Dominica Colonist, which Pactor also lists.

[52]C.O.71/63, Offices And Individuals, Gloster to Wilmot- Horton, 8 January 1825.

1822. On that occasion William Glanville had sued and won £250 in damages, and in this instance Dowdy was fined £380.[53]

A second, probably crippling blow to The Dominica Chronicle occurred on 12 January when the Assembly withdrew the contract to print business for the Legislature and awarded it to The Reporter. This meant that at a stroke Stewart suffered a loss of £300 per annum.[54] Small newspapers were highly vulnerable to the loss of this income. It was a weak point open to exploitation by the colonial Government for political ends. This financial loss was quickly followed by another political move by the Assembly on 29 January when members instigated a prosecution against Stewart for libel. This was in response to Stewart's publication of an anonymous letter on 26 January 1825 which accused the Assembly of tyranny and oppression.[55] There were a considerable number of judicial irregularities over this case. For example, Stewart alleged that five of the Grand Jury who found a true Bill against him were also members of the Assembly with an obvious interest in obtaining a guilty verdict.[56] However, when the case came to Court on 1 September 1825 much to his surprise Stewart was acquitted.[57]

It is ironic that of The Trinidad Courant, The Guiana Chronicle, and The Dominica Chronicle, the paper which carried the least political weight should have been the victim of repressive decisions made by the authorities. The Dominica

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[53]See The Dominica Chronicle, 23 March, 29 June, 6 July 1825.

[54]C.O.74/16, Journals of the Dominica Assembly, 1824-1825, 12 January 1825.

[55]The Dominica Chronicle, 26 January 1825.

[56]C.O.71/61, Offices And Individuals, Stewart's memorial to Bathurst, 4 February 1825.

[57]The Dominica Chronicle, 7 September 1825.

Chronicle's support in the Assembly was limited and not enough to counter these decisions. Henry Glanville made a move in late September 1825 to return official printing to Stewart, but his attempt was defeated by five votes.[58] That The Chronicle failed to survive is not surprising. It is difficult to say for certain whether the blows inflicted on the paper in January 1825 were responsible for initiating its decline, but it seems likely. Stewart continued to publish The Chronicle for a further couple of years, but it closed on 6 June 1827, apparently after a lengthy period of falling sales.[59]

The three disputes examined above involved the different branches of colonial Government and were largely concerned with the use of institutional power. The press either provoked these disputes or contributed to them as a significant peripheral factor. In Antigua the conflict was somewhat different in that it was much more closely connected to class-based tensions in white society. In the late 1820's The Antigua Free Press campaigned against what its owner, Robert Priest, felt was wholesale corruption in the island's judiciary. The events which followed shared much in common with earlier conflicts, but there were several important differences. Smith, Rough, and Gloster were all Crown appointees, which meant that there was a particularly intense degree of vehemence in the criticism aimed at each man by the colonists. They were outsiders, imposed by the British Government, who were alleged to have abused their professional privileges. In Antigua press criticism was directed at white colonists who occupied positions of power within the oligarchy. This criticism came from an individual outside this power structure and who, unlike William Stewart, also had no

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[58]C.O.74/16, Journals of the Dominica Assembly, 1824-1825, 26 September 1825.

[59]The Dominica Chronicle, 6 June 1827.

direct connections with the plantation economy. It is clear that Robert Priest had a constant struggle to maintain The Free Press as a profitable enterprise, and economically he must have been among the lower class of white society. Priest's conflict with the Antiguan authorities was clearly tinged with class tension.

In terms of the political climate within white Antiguan society, this incident is very revealing. The persecution of Priest by the judiciary appears incongruous when it is considered in the light of what the colonists saw as the political relationship between the colonies and Britain. During the late 1820's and 1830's West Indian colonists stridently reiterated their claims to the rights and liberties of Englishmen. The interference of the British Government in the colonies was seen as a violation of property rights and an unwarranted incursion into the liberties of British subjects. The rulers of white colonial society invoked notions of freedom and liberty when they thought that the colonies were being attacked by the British Government, but the application of these principles did not always occur in the colonies themselves. When Priest exercised his rights and liberties by criticising the ruling Antiguan elite he was imprisoned. The comparison between colonial rhetoric aimed at London and the reality of white Antiguan society highlights the self-interested declarations of the ruling group of white colonists. The persecution of Priest acquires added significance when it is recalled that The Antigua Free Press at this time was emphatically pro-planter; the paper opposed the British Government's attempts to ameliorate slave conditions, and was hostile to free coloured advancement. Yet this political loyalty to the fundamental principles underlying a white-dominated slave-based society counted for nothing when Priest attacked corruption among the white ruling class.

Despite the differences between Antigua and those cases discussed above, there are important points of comparison. One of the most basic is the nature of the papers involved. The Antigua Free Press was a political newspaper in the tradition of The Trinidad Courant, The Guiana Chronicle and to a lesser extent The Dominica Chronicle. The editors of The Courant and The Guiana Chronicle had strong views on what the function of their papers should be, and they were independent and aggressively critical of all forms of colonial authority - executive, judicial and legislative. When Trinidad and Demerara were under the control of other European powers political activity had been limited; The Courant and The Chronicle helped set the norm for white political behaviour which emerged under the British. In Legislative West Indian colonies, there was an older political tradition of white participatory activity, and the 1820's saw an increase in this. Although the inspiration for this political activity came from the defence of slavery, this formed only one editorial aspect of planter papers, albeit the most striking. Class tensions within the white elite persisted throughout the immediate pre-abolition period and beyond; the social compression of the white elite produced by pressures for abolition was not strong enough to remove them. The Antigua Free Press faced up to the fact of these tensions and denounced the inimical effects of oligarchical power. In the late 1820's, The Free Press printed editorials complaining that the whole of the Antiguan judiciary was corrupt and in need of restructuring. In April 1829, Priest printed an anonymous article which complained about the Court of Chancery's disposal of a bankrupt plantation. Priest's comment on the situation appeared at the end of this article:

> ... we know sufficient of the proceedings of the Chancery Court of this island, constituted as it is at present, to say that it wants a complete revision, and that

> until it is under the jurisdiction of men acquainted with the **LAW**, and divested altogether of local interests, it never can be considered a legal or impartial tribunal.[60]

Initially the events which this criticism instigated raised important questions about the role of a colonial newspaper and the political state of Antiguan society. The nature of The Free Press' relationship with white Antiguans, its reporting of internal affairs, and the accountability of the colonial authorities were important issues implicit in the Priest affair. The repressive reaction of the authorities shows that the colony's political system was impaired by the sensitivity of certain colonial officials to public criticism. The bare political structure of Antigua had allowed for the development of a political newspaper like The Free Press, yet the people who controlled local power were reluctant to accept the consequences of a free press. Similar questions to those posed by the Priest affair had also been raised by The Guiana Chronicle in 1820, but in both colonies these issues were superseded by other concerns. In Demerara an important dispute about the extent of official power occurred, while in Antigua things degenerated into personal feuds between Robert Priest and two of the Judges sitting on the Bench.

During the 1820's and 1830's, the Antiguan Bench was full of colonists who were legally unqualified. There appears to have been widespread disillusionment throughout the colony with this state of affairs. In the early 1820's, the official Government investigation into the state of legal practices and institutions in the West Indies included a number of critical comments regarding Antigua. The Commissioners

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[60]The Antigua Free Press, 3 April 1829.

conducting the investigation arrived in the colony in July 1823. Their final report noted:

> The complaints preferred during their stay of nearly three months in this island, were very numerous, and indicated, in at least one of the parties into which the island was unfortunately divided, a very strong dissatisfaction with the existing institutions and judicial habits of the country. In addition to the prejudices with which they had generally to contend, there were some peculiar and local circumstances which rendered the uncompromising discharge of their duty, at this period, most painful and difficult to the Commissioners; such were the violent personal animosities prevailing at the bar and even invading the bench; the jealousies of the contending parties; the secret hostility to the Commission... the influence of some and the fear of others.[61]

The reference to 'one of the parties' almost certainly refers to the free coloured population, but it does seem that the feeling of dissatisfaction with the judiciary extended across the colour divide. It is impossible to say for sure if The Free Press was acting as the voice of an Antiguan political faction in the way that The Trinidad Courant and The Guiana Chronicle had done. However, it would seem likely that the paper was articulating a sense of grievance held by at least some of the colonists.

Following criticism in The Free Press of the Antiguan Court of Chancery, Priest was summoned to Court and charged with contempt. Priest referred the charge to his Counsel, James Scotland Jnr., who requested time to formulate a proper reply; this was refused. On 13 April 1829, the Antiguan Chief Justice Paul Horsford,

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[61] *Third Report (Antigua, Montserrat, Nevis, St. Kitts, Virgin Islands), of The Commissioners on Civil And Criminal Justice in The West Indies*. P.P. 1826-1827 (36) XXIV, p.6.

demanded the name of Priest's anonymous source for the article on the bankrupt plantation. Priest refused to disclose the source, and the exculpatory affidavit he submitted instead was dismissed. Priest was then imprisoned for contempt of court, the sentence being open-ended.[62] Evidently, Priest felt strongly enough about the ethics of betraying his source to endure a spell in prison rather than give up the name. The man later came forward voluntarily, but Priest remained in jail. Incarceration seemed to harden Priest's opinions. Instead of offering contrition to the court he increased the level of criticism in his paper.

The outright suppression of The Free Press did not follow the imprisonment of its owner and editor. As with all of the other editors - apart from Matthew Gallagher - who were jailed during this period, Priest was allowed to supervise publication of The Free Press while in jail. In practice, this probably meant that Priest wrote the editorial column and approved the proof-sheets arranged by his compositors or a deputy editor. Priest's freedom to do this was in itself an indication of the level of political latitude in the colony. As events progressed it also meant that the serious issues outlined above were replaced by rather more trivial ones, although even these trivialities revealed certain aspects of white Antiguan society.

Several editions of The Free Press organised from jail contained highly critical personal attacks on the Antiguan Chief Justice, Paul Horsford, and one of the other Judges, Kean Osborn.[63] At this point the issue of class came explicitly to the fore. Horsford and Osborn were important men in Antigua, who according to M. G. Smith's socio-economic definition, were 'principal whites.' That is, members of the white elite

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[62]The Antigua Free Press, 17 April 1829.

[63]Ibid. 24 April, 1, 15, 22 May 1829.

in positions of power and authority over other 'secondary whites.'[64] Horsford was a proprietor, although it is not known how many acres he owned; he had been appointed Chief Justice in April 1823; was also a Judge on the Court of Chancery; and by 1832, he was a Council member. In 1829, Osborn owned 1,007 acres; and he was a Judge in both the Court of Chancery and the Court of Common pleas.[65] In comparison Robert Priest was a secondary white who could not compete with Horsford or Osborn either in terms of personal wealth or political power.

Priest's public criticisms inevitably drew an aggressive response. Horsford and Osborn sued for libel, and the cases were heard after Priest had been released from his first spell in jail on 30 May 1829. The first case, Horsford Vs. Priest, was marked by blatant jury rigging aimed at ensuring a favourable verdict for the plaintiff.[66] This was an example of precisely the kind of abuse of judicial power which Priest had campaigned against in The Free Press. Both cases involved a high degree of personal bitterness and this contributed to their outcome. Priest was found guilty in both instances. He was fined £250 currency in the Horsford case, although in the Osborn case he lost a desultory 6d in damages. Priest was unable to pay the £250 to Horsford, and was briefly committed to jail for a second time in mid-August.[67] A public subscription was raised on Priest's behalf and he was released after less than a

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[64]M.G. Smith, The Plural Society in The British West Indies, Berkeley 1965, p.93.

[65]This information was taken from various Blue Books in the C.O.10 series, and also from Hall, Five of The Leewards, Appendix A.

[66]An analysis of the list of jurors explaining why most of the proposed jurymen were unacceptable to Priest's Counsel was printed in The Antigua Free Press, 3 July 1829.

[67]Ibid. 14 August 1829.

week.[68] This indicates some public sympathy on his behalf, and perhaps shows that he was not isolated in his views on judicial corruption. This view is supported by the memorial to the Colonial Office which had been drawn up for Priest when he had first been imprisoned.[69] As an exercise in intimidation, the Antiguan judiciary's assaults on The Free Press do not appear to have worked. Although The Free Press's political vigour never quite matched the levels attained between April and July 1829, occasionally the paper continued to criticise judicial irregularities and other aspects of Antiguan political life.[70]

The Priest case clearly contained elements of class tension, but in the final analysis it was little more than a series of personal disputes between individuals rooted in different economic circumstances. In contrast, a more overt example of class conflict within the white population had occurred in Barbados in 1819, and the press had played a crucial role in fomenting and sustaining this political instability. The conflict centred on struggles between clearly differentiated factions within white society over political reforms and control of the Barbadian Assembly. However, this was muted class conflict that never developed into violent confrontation. This may well have been a conscious choice by the participants; open class warfare between white colonists would have been extremely dangerous in a colony that had experienced a major slave rebellion only three years before. Ultimately, the political energy generated by this high-profile dispute was channelled into an electoral contest.

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[68]Ibid. 21 August 1829.

[69]This memorial does not appear to have been sent, but part of it was reprinted in The Barbados Globe, 18 June 1829.

[70]See for example, The Antigua Free Press, 26 February 1830, which was critical of the Assembly's measures to prohibit publication in the Island press of the letters from the colony's agent.

In the second decade of the nineteenth century political tension developed in Barbados between rival white groups at different economic levels. The 'Salmagundi' were a numerous middle class of the white population who held small amounts of land. Not all of these colonists were engaged in sugar cultivation; they were located in the northern and southern ends of the island, where during the eighteenth century many had grown cotton.[71] The 'Pumpkins' were well-established big sugar planters who formed the top layer of white colonial society, and who monopolised local power.[72] Thus, the political alignment of white colonists in Barbados at this time has an immediate sense of being dictated by class. Secondary evidence suggests that both of these groups had founded newspapers; The Barbados Globe for the Salmagundi, and The Western Intelligencer for the Pumpkins. However, primary sources give no indication that this happened; rather, they describe how The Globe, founded by Michael Ryan as a private business in October 1818, became the political organ of the small landowners during the first half of 1819. Despite the inconsistency of the evidence, both primary and secondary sources do agree that The Globe was founded as an avowedly political newspaper, and it does seem to have enjoyed popular support from the start. The role of The Globe was somewhat different to The Trinidad Courant and The Guiana Chronicle. Those newspapers had already been existence when the events which brought them into political prominence occurred. The pitfalls of identifying editorial pronouncements in newspapers as public opinion are well known, but it

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[71]Beckles, History of Barbados, p.46.

[72]This account comes from several sources: See the anonymous report entitled 'Statement of the Political State of the Island of Barbadoes, with an account of the cause of the Commotions - July 1819,' filed in C.O. 28/88, Combermere to Bathurst, 7 July 1819, no. 67, and various issues of The Guiana Chronicle, which devoted extensive coverage to the case. See also F.A. Hoyos, Barbados: A History From The Amerindians to Independence, London 1979, pp.98-100. Hoyos uses these rather curious terms to denote the rival groups, but I have not seen them in the contemporary evidence.

does seem that The Courant and The Chronicle had sensed the direction in which a popular current of opinion was flowing and went with it. In doing so, the press blurred the line between following the political lead provided by its readers, and actually leading those readers itself. The decision to follow this editorial course was probably made as much out of commercial considerations as out of political principle. The situation in Barbados was obviously different; Ryan had started The Globe as a means of exposing what he thought was the unacceptable conduct of public officials, and this had struck a chord with some Barbadian whites.

The Globe was initially applauded for its impartial commentaries on the colony's affairs, but it was later alleged that this impartiality had descended rapidly into unwarranted attacks on private individuals. At first this appears to have been regarded as little more than a minor irritation. Material that was highly controversial in a political sense first appeared in the paper in February 1819, and it was this which proved a catalyst for the political tension which emerged between the Salmagundi and the Pumpkins. On 26 February, a Church service was planned in order to raise funds for the formation of a society to propagate the Gospel to the island's population of poor whites. In editorials published in The Globe on 22 and 25 February, Ryan strongly objected to the use of the island militia on such ceremonial occasions; he felt this was corrupting and degrading to the militia's real purpose. The Assembly - described by Ryan as oppressive - issued instructions to the Attorney General to instigate two actions against Ryan for libelling the House of Assembly and the colonial Government. The colony's political immaturity at this point was readily apparent; The Globe was the first newspaper in the colony with a political agenda and had only been

in existence for a matter of months, yet the authorities seemed unable to cope with its criticism.

It was from this point on that The Globe really began to acquire a bedrock of strong political support within the Salmagundi. Numerous letters criticising the authorities and their attacks on Ryan started to appear in the paper. The Attorney General felt he had been libelled by one of these anonymous correspondents, and he instigated a third action against Ryan in the Court of Exchequer. On 12 May, Ryan was arrested and sent to jail; he naturally portrayed this as an attack on the liberty of the press, claiming bail had been set at £5,000, when in fact it was £500. Support for Ryan continued to grow. He was released on bail on 18 May, and a public meeting was held on the same day at which subscriptions were raised to provide financial support for the impending court cases. By now, The Globe was seen by the authorities as an integral part of a 'Reformist' party, which had capitalised on the Assembly's attacks on the paper to push for general, but rather vaguely articulated political reforms in the colony. This was a contentious stance to take during an election year, and it seems likely that the overall importance of The Globe then began to diminish. It was no longer simply a matter of press freedom; larger political issues were at stake.

However, public support for Ryan and The Globe had yet to reach its height. The colony's Grand Sessions began on 8 June, and the cases against Ryan were heard two days later. Both prosecutions instigated by the Assembly collapsed after the jury failed to find a true Bill, and Ryan was borne through the streets of the capital in triumph, apparently by a large crowd.[73] Committed supporters willing to provide financial and physical assistance were the greatest advantages of having become the

[73]It is unclear what happened to the Attorney General's prosecution for libel.

recognised organ of a reasonably well-defined political faction. This contrasts with the isolated position of William Stewart at The Dominica Chronicle, and to a lesser extent, Priest at The Antigua Free Press. Ryan's support also extended to officialdom. Two of the justices of the peace who had sat on the Bench for the Ryan case, John Lane and Cheesman Moe, had joined in the celebrations of Ryan's acquittal and a few weeks later they were removed from the Bench; their removal gave fresh impetus to the conflicts which were dividing white society.

All of these events helped to determine the outcome of the general election. The Salmagundi won a majority in the Assembly, which to some extent must have defused class tensions. Lane and Moe were both elected. However, the election failed to achieve a stable alignment of Barbadian politics, because the Pumpkins maintained their grip on the colony's Council. On 30 May 1820, Michael Ryan was appointed official printer to the Assembly. The appointment immediately caused a rift between the Assembly and the Council, which (because it disapproved of Ryan's political principles), refused to sanction the bills Ryan submitted for printing the minutes of the Assembly.[74] The importance that class divisions had played in determining the political nature of these events was obliquely recognised outside Barbados. The Guiana Chronicle published extensive reports on Barbadian affairs and stated:

> It is pretty generally understood, we believe, that a few individuals have been the means of dividing Barbados into factions, and have drawn well-meaning persons to their interests, either by a real or specious concern for their country. Of late they have been distinguishing themselves by the warmth and violence

[74]C.O.28/92, Warde to Bathurst, 2 July 1823, private.

with which they espouse the cause of their respective parties. The Press has undoubtedly been the *primum mobile* of these disturbances...[75]

Throughout the early and mid-1820's, Michael Ryan continued to publish attacks on the Council, which in retaliation refused to sanction the payment of bills for printing. As in Dominica, the financial importance of this printing contract had given the Barbadian Council considerable political leverage over The Globe. The Council's refusal to sanction payment to Ryan caused tension between the two parts of the Legislature. In November 1824, after publication of a particular article Ryan was ordered to attend before the House for an official reprimand, but this was prevented by his ill health.[76] The tensions between the Assembly and the Council caused by The Globe appear to have died away after 1825, a period which coincided with Ryan's withdrawal from active involvement with the paper because of ill-health.

Superficially, The Barbados Globe seemed for a period to be the fulcrum on which Barbadian political developments moved. To some extent this is to give the paper too much importance. In all the incidents which have been discussed above the role of the press was largely peripheral to other events. The exact boundary between the press actually stimulating events and merely following and reporting them is always difficult to trace. Arguably, this is less so in the case of Trinidad and Demerara where the particular forms of Government in those colonies pushed the press into positions of considerable strength and prominence. In Barbados, The Globe became a political target because the colony's Assembly was unused to political

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[75]The Guiana Chronicle, 14 July 1819.

[76]See C.O.31/49, Journals of the Barbadian Assembly, 1819-1825, 21 October 1823; 19 October and 2 November 1824; 25 October and 15 November 1825.

criticism and was incensed by it. The Assembly's attempts to intimidate Michael Ryan into closing the paper produced a surge of popular support for the freedom of the press. However, the importance of The Globe did not remain at a consistently high level; like the newspapers in Trinidad and Demerara, the importance of The Globe diminished as events developed. In the case of The Globe, the process of marginalisation occurred because the paper was utilised by a group of whites anxious to forward their own political objectives. They appear to have blended the issue of press freedom with wider political concerns. Conflict involving the press had again become part of political struggles between distinct elements of the white population; the press was an important medium through which these conflicts could be expressed.

The particular nature of The Barbados Globe as a politically campaigning newspaper links it to The Trinidad Courant, The Guiana Chronicle, and The Antigua Free Press. All four were self-consciously political newspapers run by men who felt them to be intrinsically part of the political culture of the colonies. However, their conception of participatory political behaviour was strictly limited to white society. Gallagher, Stevenson, Priest, and Ryan lacked any sense of a political culture which extended beyond the boundaries of white society. When they did venture outside those boundaries it was usually to characterise what they saw in hostile terms; avaricious, grasping free coloureds, or ignorant and insubordinate slaves. In this respect they contrast totally with those editors who came to prominence in the period immediately prior to abolition. This group had a much greater sensitivity to the political atmosphere of the colonies to which, of course, the free coloureds and the slaves made vital contributions. This fact, combined with the political developments happening in Britain, imbued colonial press disputes with a close degree of similarity. Earlier press

disputes can be interpreted within a loose framework provided by the formation and the disintegration of power relationships within the white class. By 1830, the political culture of the colonies was being widened, despite the best efforts of editors like Stevenson and Priest to resist such moves, and this was reflected in a second phase of press conflict.

The events discussed above were manifestations of white colonial politics. They were dominated by the white elite and had no political dimension explicitly relating to the slave and free coloured population. The origins of these conflicts did not lie in fundamental differences of opinion on social matters, but stemmed from grievances about the distribution and application of power within the white elite, not the fact that power was wholly monopolised by whites. Conflicts which occurred between 1829 and 1835 involving The Antigua Free Press under James Scotland Snr., The Weekly Register, The Watchman, and The St. Kitts Advertiser also had their roots in grievances about the unequal distribution of power; the crucial difference was one of political perspective. In these instances the four newspapers involved were arguing for a radical redistribution of power throughout the ethnic groups, rather than just within the white elite. This is a particularly apposite interpretation of events for The Watchman, The Weekly Register, and The St. Kitts Advertiser. These papers were owned and edited by free coloured men who, in the case of Jordon and Osborn at The Watchman and Loving at The Register, were of central importance in the campaign to win civil and political rights for that class. The Weekly Register, The Watchman, The Antigua Free Press, and to a lesser extent The Advertiser viewed society, by contemporary standards in radical terms. This means that conflicts involving these

newspapers can be considered on an entirely different plane to those incidents discussed above. This plane was determined primarily by the politics of colour and abolition, rather than by the enclosed, claustrophobic politics of white colonial society.

Clashes between The Weekly Register and the Antiguan authorities were a vital part of the struggle to win civil and political rights and to create opportunities for free coloured advancement. Free coloured political struggles can be seen as attempts to redistribute power vertically down through the racial hierarchy. In comparison to white political activity these struggles were difficult undertakings. White political activity was an accepted part of colonial life, but free coloureds engaging in the same activities were viewed with great suspicion. In Antigua some of the first indications of the extent of white unease at The Register were demonstrated in November 1828, when the Antiguan Council struck at the paper's vulnerable point by cancelling the contract to print the business of the Legislature. Although the evidence for this cancellation is limited, it is probable that Henry Loving was punished because he had published politically unacceptable material concerning the suspension of an Antiguan barrister, John Osborn.[77]

The Weekly Register had held the Antiguan printing contract on a triennial basis since 1816, and on 1 October 1828 it came up for renewal. A member of the Assembly suggested opening the contract to public competition, which was agreed. However, only Loving submitted a tender. Robert Priest declined to put in a bid. The Free Press later alleged Priest had been offered the contract, but for some reason he

[77]The minutes of the Antiguan Assembly for the years 1826-1863 in the C.O.9 series are missing. The account has been taken from The Register, 14 July 1829.

had turned the Assembly's offer down.[78] Despite this, the Assembly took no notice of Loving's tender. In the following weeks the Osborn affair occupied the attention of the colony, and Loving adopted a sympathetic stance towards the disgraced Barrister. Loving published a summary of the legal proceedings against Osborn; a course of action which resulted in Loving receiving a written complaint from the Judges of the Court of Common Pleas. Loving refused to answer this, but later printed parts of the letter in The Register. Shortly after this Loving received a copy of the official judgement in the Osborn case, which he refused to publish, claiming that it needed an official note with which he could headline the article. Loving also pointed out that the contract to print Government business was still suspended and inquired if he was to receive payment for inserting the judgement. The Judges of the court were also members of the Council and in this role they sent a note of complaint to the Assembly, advising that the contract for The Register should not be renewed. Various members of the Assembly rejected the idea, and in turn the Council stated that it would refuse to accept Loving's tender. Antiguan printing remained in this uncertain position until The Antigua Herald was started in 1832. Political indiscretion had lost The Weekly Register £190 per annum. A few weeks later, Loving was ordered before the Bar of the Assembly, to explain inaccuracies in The Register's reporting of proceedings in the House. Loving's explanation was satisfactory, but he was warned to ensure accuracy in his future reports.[79] These two brushes with authority presaged the intimidation that was to come.

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[78]The Antigua Free Press, 15 March 1832.

[79]The Weekly Register, 23 December 1828.

Although there is no direct evidence that Henry Loving's colour influenced the Antiguan Legislature's hostility, it seems highly likely. The awkward consequences for free coloureds who engaged in any sort of political activity were further shown in October 1829 when Loving was tried for allegedly libelling the whole Antiguan community. This incident was almost certainly linked to the assaults which had been made on The Antigua Free Press earlier in the year. The Antiguan authorities may have reasoned that having attacked one of the colony's editors the other paper needed to undergo a similar process of intimidation. The fact that Loving was a free coloured was a bonus in the sense that his trial could be used as a symbolic reminder of white power at a time when the unchallenged assumptions of previous decades were being eroded. It cannot be definitely proved that the Antiguan judiciary was waiting for an excuse to prosecute Loving, but the grounds for prosecution and the flimsiness of the charges indicate that this was the case. The prosecution was founded on a vague and allusive paragraph which appeared in The Register in July 1829:

> We are at present dozing over the "rumours" and "additional rumours" of the past week, but our enemies must not imagine that we are fast asleep. Perchance we may dream a dream in which they are poutrayed [sic] so much to the life, that we might take sketches in character, and wo [sic] be to that man whose hands are spotted with blood, should he fall within the range of our vision.[80]

On 17 October, almost three months after this had appeared in The Register, the Antiguan Grand Jury presented it to the Court of Grand Sessions, and Loving was

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[80]Ibid. 21 July 1829.

charged with libelling 'the whole community.'[81] The case was heard on 26 October, with Loving conducting his own defence. He made a number of comments which made it clear he intended to make political capital out of the trial by highlighting the racial aspects of the situation. In a brief address to the jury before starting his defence, Loving asserted:

> You have all, or most of you, been invariably kind and courteous in private life and intercourse, but not one of you will seriously assert that I am your equal.[82]

Later in his defence Loving claimed the Attorney General, William Lee, disliked free coloureds and that he was the driving force behind the prosecution. In a move that was characteristic of free coloured political activity at this time, Loving also emphasised his unwavering loyalty to the British Crown:

> ... I labour under unmerited political disabilities and privations enough to shake the loyalty of one possessing less religion and education than myself... but let me tell you Gentlemen, that *I* have never thought of rallying around an American Eagle for some fancied offence offered me by the parent state.[83]

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[81]Ibid. 20 October 1829.

[82]Ibid. 3 November 1829.

[83]Ibid.

Loving was eventually acquitted. If the trial had indeed been planned as an intimidatory exercise, it had failed and to some extent proved counter-productive. It was probably a pivotal event in convincing Loving that the political caution hitherto expressed in The Register was pointless. From a free coloured point of view, it seemed the iniquities of colonial society were so great that refusing directly to address these problems no longer served any self-protecting purposes at all.

The conflicts involving The Antigua Free Press under the editorship of James Scotland Snr. show that there were variations of political thought within the white elite, and they call into consideration factors about white psychological responses to a newspaper which in a sense was out of place. White-owned newspapers were 'supposed' to reflect primarily white planting interests. This was not the case with Scotland, who was an exceptional figure in that he managed to sustain a prolonged colonial campaign for the immediate abolition of slavery. The persecution which he suffered between 1831 and 1834 was a predictable result of his political views. Scotland mixed socially with free coloureds, and his genuine espousal of their rights and his demands for the abolition of slavery in The Free Press made it inevitable that elements of the Antiguan authorities would try to tackle what was a subversive threat to white supremacy.

From the white point of view the need to confront the Antiguan press in this way had been increased by a surge of racial tension which had occurred in Antigua in the spring of 1831. This had involved both slaves and free coloureds. The slaves had become agitated because of the Assembly's decision to abolish the Sunday market. This was the main outlet for the selling of surplus produce grown by the slaves on their provision grounds. In addition to this slave unrest there were the two

free coloured disturbances which had occurred after Henry Loving had been assaulted by Robert Jarritt. It later became clear that elements within the Antiguan authorities blamed the press for the unrest, but no immediate action was taken against either The Weekly Register or The Free Press. Direct action came in October 1831, when the Antiguan Grand Jury made a presentment to the Court of King's Bench and Grand Sessions. This blamed both of the Antiguan newspapers for the unrest, but the Jury singled out Scotland for particular criticism:

> The Grand Jury can but recognise in that individual the wily reporter of misrepresentation and falsehood; the Supporter of faction and disobedience, and the considerate libeller of conduct, both public and private, - to an extent calculated to bring all authority into contempt, to excite discontent... And though he may nevertheless, with malignant ingenuity, have sheltered himself within the pale of legal observance, the Grand Jury cannot allow him to escape the strongest expression of their abhorrence, at proceedings and calculations, so maliciously wicked in principle, and dangerous in operation.[84]

After considering this the Judges of the Court ordered that the presentment be sent to Barbados, Trinidad and Demerara for official publication in the newspapers of those colonies.[85] Presumably, this was intended to ruin Scotland's name throughout the West Indies, as the colonial newspaper interchange system would ensure that the presentment would reach other colonies. Scotland was taken completely unawares by

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[84]Presentment of the Antiguan Grand Jury, 4 October 1831. Reprinted in The Antigua Free Press, 13 October 1831.

[85]The material relating to this case, much of which is contradictory on the details, can be found in C.O.7/31, Ross to Goderich, 15 November 1831, no. 33; 20 December, no. 38. C.O.7/32, Offices And Individuals. C.O.7/33, Ross to Goderich, 9 January 1832, no. 3; 28 February, no. 14; 28 February, no. 15; 26 March, no. 16; 29 March, no. 19; 30 March, no. 21. C.O 7/34, Ross to Goderich, 21 June, no. 44.

this and retaliated in print in several issues of The Free Press, accusing the Bench and the Grand Jury of collusion. The Free Press called the Grand Jury 'worthless', and described one of the Judges as a 'terrorist' and 'a man of insinuation.'[86] This was Judge William Byam, a colonist who was a principal white. Byam was a planter, who in 1829 owned four hundred and fifty-two acres; he was a Judge on the Court of King's Bench, and in 1832 he became a member of Council.[87] In comparison Scotland was a secondary white, who had no economic stake in the plantation system and was excluded from the oligarchy.[88] Here again there are clear indications of class tensions within white society, similar to those noted in the Priest case. A private letter to the Secretary of State shows that Scotland himself was aware of this element of class conflict. Scotland wrote of a:

> ... combination... formed by agriculturalists, whose interests absorb, or tread down, all others in these countries. The Merchant and the Mechanic are entirely dependent upon them, and fear or interest often extorts from such persons an outward approbation of the measures of those who rule, however repugnant their secret judgement and feelings may be. It is not then to be wondered at, if, when any man offends this powerful party, the general opinion should appear to condemn him.[89]

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[86]The Antigua Free Press, 13 October 1831.

[87]Hall, Five of The Leewards, p.192; C.O.7/34, Ross to Goderich 20 July 1832, for a list of Council members.

[88]Although his son James Scotland Jnr, a barrister, had been elected to the Assembly in May 1827: The Weekly Register, 22 May 1827.

[89]C.O.7/32, Offices And Individuals, Scotland to Goderich, 14 November 1831.

Thus, Scotland's political views clearly differentiate this incident from earlier class-based conflicts.

Scotland's comments about Byam in The Free Press ensured that the confrontation would move to the courtroom. On 26 October, Scotland faced a Bench which refused him a trial by jury and considered the case in private. Byam had claimed Scotland's articles had been libels against him, but the Attorney General, William Lee, persuaded the Judges that the contempt should be considered as being against the Court collectively rather than any individual. Scotland does not seem to have been given the chance to present a proper defence. He was sentenced to six months imprisonment, and ordered to find securities for future good behaviour of £200 currency in total.

Scotland was liberated from jail on 25 January 1832 by order of the Secretary of State, Lord Goderich, who due to Scotland's own efforts, intervened to overrule the sentence.[90] The oligarchy's persecution of Scotland - which continued in the intervening years before abolition - can be traced directly to the political contents of The Free Press. There is no doubt that many whites regarded Scotland's expression of his political beliefs as a betrayal of his race. While Scotland was in jail there were rumours that a conspiracy was under way to destroy the paper's printing presses. This came to light on 15 December, when James Scotland Jnr. was approached by a fellow Assemblyman, George Martin. Martin was concerned at the possible effects on the slaves if the November Order in Council was published in The Free Press, and asked Scotland Jnr. to persuade his father not to print the Order. Scotland replied that he had nothing to do with the paper, and Martin then mentioned that there were rumours in

[90]C.O.393/3, Goderich to Ross, 22 December 1831, no. 18.

the colony of a conspiracy to destroy the paper. According to Scotland Jnr., Martin said:

> ... he had only heard it said that, that the Press ought to have been pulled down, and it was inquired why they did not pull it down, as they did the Barbados Chapel. He said, that he would have had no hesitation to have assisted, that it never would have been known who did it. That the character of The Free Press justifies arbitrary measures...[91]

Martin later sent evidence to the Colonial Office claiming that this was a distortion of the conversation.[92]

Although it has been impossible to establish if there was a genuine plot to destroy The Free Press, the colonists who made these comparisons were obviously making a mental link between the newspaper and the Chapel in Barbados. They identified both as inimical to their interests. Nothing came of the rumours, but they did prompt Scotland to write to Governor Ross and the Secretary of State to seek protection.[93] This incident confirms that the alienation of whites from The Free Press applied both to the principal whites who controlled local politics and the secondary whites who were on a more equal level with Scotland himself. Where Robert Priest seems to have established some sort of connection between secondary whites unhappy with the conduct of judicial officials, and his Free Press, his successor James Scotland Snr. irrevocably broke it.

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[91]C.O.7/31, statement from James Scotland Jnr., 15 December 1831, enclosed with no. 38. Reprinted in The Antigua Free Press, 22 December 1831.

[92]C.O.7/33, Ross to Goderich, 9 January 1832, no. 3, enclosures.

[93]C.O.7/31, Scotland to Ross, 17 December 1831, enclosed with no. 38.

The political stance of The Antigua Free Press opened a dimension to these events which was absent in the earlier cases discussed. In a way it was symbolic of the entire West Indian dilemma at this time. The Free Press was attuned politically to the British Government, and religiously to the abolitionist movement. The persecution of the editor can therefore be interpreted as a tangible illustration of the tension that was felt by whites in the colonies at metropolitan political developments. Scotland was a target for colonists who wanted to attack a person perceived as being a part of the oppressive alliance of Government and abolitionists which was dragging the colonies towards disaster.

The problems faced by liberal colonial newspapers persisted after the abolition of slavery. The imprisonment, in 1835, of Samuel Cable, editor of The St. Kitts Advertiser, stemmed from abuses in the apprenticeship system. The system was designed to facilitate the transformation from slave to free labour, but in St. Kitts and other colonies it was initially resisted by the former slaves.[94] Throughout the four years it was in operation the apprenticeship system remained wide open to manipulation by the planters. In July 1835, a Special Magistrate, William Thomson ruled in favour of two skilled apprentices - a cooper and a blacksmith - who had brought complaints about being forced to perform praedial labour. The Court of King's Bench overruled this decision and The Advertiser criticised their ruling:

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[94]Richard Frucht, 'Emancipation And Revolt in The West Indies: St. Kitts, 1834,' Science And Society 34, 2, 1975, pp.199-214.

> The question cannot be considered as set at rest. Constituted as the Court is the majority of its members have a distinct interest in reaching the conclusion to which they have attained.[95]

In the wake of the August 1834 disturbances the authorities were perhaps still sensitive to the possibility of apprentice unrest. Samuel Cable's reputation as an editor had already come in for criticism when, during those earlier events, he had been forced to retract an erroneous statement concerning the number of apprentices in revolt.[96] This condemnation of Cable may have militated against his editorial position a year later; on 28 August 1835 in response to his comments about the reversal of Thomson's decision, Cable was accused of contempt of the Court of King's Bench. He was given the chance to print an apology for the contempt, but the Court later judged that he had failed to do this; the apology that Cable did print was said to have compounded the original insult. On 11 September, Cable was sentenced to three months in jail, and then to find securities, himself in £200 currency and two others for £100. As with the Loving case there is no direct evidence that Samuel Cable's colour played any part in influencing the decision of the Judges, but it would seem likely. Before abolition, Cable did not express as strong a commitment to all of his class as Henry Loving had done, but by this time there were signs that his politics were hardening. Cable's petition to the President of St. Kitts, written whilst in jail, makes it clear that he was as equally concerned with the situation of the apprentices

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[95]Extract of The St. Kitts Advertiser, 25 August 1835. Filed in C.O.239/42, Judges of The Court of King's Bench to Secretary of State, 27 January 1836, enclosed with no. 42.

[96]Frucht, 'Emancipation And Revolt,' p.210.

as he was with the questionable legality of the Bench's reversal of Thomson's decision:

> That your petitioner was induced to offer such remarks upon the aforesaid judgement by his belief that the aforesaid judgement was contrary to law, and that it would operate as a grievous hardship upon many apprenticed labourers in this island.[97]

Cable was freed on 18 October by an order from Governor General MacGregor, who seems to have regarded the affair as of little importance.[98]

The Cable case contained many of the themes considered in this research. At the heart of the matter were concerns about the misuse of power similar to those which had been expressed in Trinidad in 1810 and Demerara in 1820. However, the case had more in common with Antigua in 1829 than it did with these earlier examples. Cable's criticism of those colonists who were in positions of judicial authority was reminiscent of the views put forward by Robert Priest. Cable's colour and the politically liberal overtones in The St. Kitts Advertiser link it to that phase of press political activity which had been shaped by the politics of colour and abolition. Concerns about the freedom of the press which had appeared in Demerara, Barbados, and Antigua were also a factor in St. Kitts. By the mid-1830's the St. Kitts oligarchy was still finding it difficult to come to terms with the challenges posed by a free press. Samuel Cable himself viewed things in terms of the freedom of the press to report judicial corruption:

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[97]C.O.239/40, Cable's petition to William Greatheed Crooke (President of Government administering the island), 14 September 1835, enclosed with no. 205.

[98]C.O.239/40, MacGregor to Glenelg, 16 October 1835, no. 205; see also, 30 November 1835, no. 237.

> We are but humble journalists, but we trust, we are also acquainted with our duties, and sensible to our responsibilities, in such our less lofty capacity. We know the rights of the press; we believe those rights to form one of the most effectual guards of civil freedom; for those rights we are prepared to encounter the spoiling of our goods, the imprisonment of our persons, the peril of our lives. *Sanguis martyrorum semen Ecclesia.*[99]

The colonists who were local Government officials, in common with those in other colonies, still lacked the capacity to cope with unfettered public criticism.

The incidents involving The Antigua Free Press were earlier described as symbolic of the tension which existed between Britain and the West Indian colonies in the early 1830's. A similar type of symbolism existed in Trinidad at the same time, although in this instance the fundamentals of the Antiguan example were inverted. Instead of a liberal newspaper clashing with recalcitrant colonial officials, this case involved a planter newspaper and a Crown appointee, and this incident provides different perspectives on the abolition crisis.[100] The Port of Spain Gazette was a quintessential planter newspaper, resolutely opposed to measures proposed by the British Government. The Crown appointee was the Chief Justice, George Scotland, who was determined to implement those measures.[101] Scotland arrived in Trinidad in February 1832 and within a couple of months was locked into a bitter dispute with

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[99]The St. Kitts Advertiser, 1 September 1835, enclosed with no. 205.

[100]This incident is covered in Fraser, History of Trinidad, Vol. II, 276-285, 333-334; and Carmichael History of Trinidad And Tobago, p.182.

[101]A younger brother of James Scotland Snr. George Scotland, b. Antigua 28 June 1782, d. Kensington 31 January 1865. Chief Justice of Trinidad between 1832 and 1849.

The Port of Spain Gazette. Scotland's arrival coincided with the paper's adoption of an aggressive political phase, marked by extreme hostility towards the local executive and the British Government. Scotland, as an imposed representative of that Government was inevitably criticised by the paper. However, his own actions and personality greatly contributed to a deterioration in his relationship with his colleagues and large numbers of the colonists, and he became involved in a series of controversial issues. These included the prosecution of slave owners in the Vice Admiralty Court for illegal slave importations, complaints about his salary and fees, and also his general demeanour towards the colonists. In September 1834, the Governor claimed that Scotland's personal manner had created an unworkable situation in the island's judiciary.[102] Thus, it is important to note that although the press conflict involving The Port of Spain Gazette was closely linked to political developments that had recently taken place in the colony, there was a thread which connected this dispute to those involving the white-owned press stretching back to 1810. Familiar complaints about judicial conduct and integrity, the extent of judicial power and its alleged abuse, all appeared in the early years of George Scotland's tenure as Trinidadian Chief Justice. The dissatisfaction with Scotland was, however, far from uniform throughout the colony. In November 1834, Governor Hill forwarded a memorial to the Colonial Office, signed by about a thousand people, expressing their confidence in the Chief Justice.[103]

The main clash between Scotland and The Port of Spain Gazette arose from the enforcement of the Order in Council of 2 November 1831, and from the partial

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[102]C.O.295/103, Hill to Spring-Rice, 3 September 1834, private.

[103]Ibid. 24 November 1834, no. 40. The ethnic origin of the memorialists is unknown.

reorganisation of the Trinidadian judicial system that had been imposed by the British Government.[104] The Order in Council, which was intended to supplant the 1823 Order and further improve slave conditions, was bitterly resented by Trinidadian planters. A public meeting was organised to memorialise the views of Trinidadian colonists, and The Port of Spain Gazette regularly inveighed against the Order.[105] The new system of justice compelled the colony's Alcaldes to prosecute all cases of cruelty against slaves, as defined by the Order, in the reorganised Criminal Court. In early May 1832, the two Alcaldes who were supposed to assist Scotland administer justice, refused to carry out their judicial duties arguing that hearing minor cases in the criminal court was an unjustifiable burden on the colony's finances.[106] This refusal temporarily halted all judicial proceedings, but the Governor chose not to intervene because further innovation in the judicial system was due to be made; it was planned to remove the Alcaldes as assistant Judges.

The Port of Spain Gazette applauded the Alcalde who had initially refused to undertake the prosecutions under the headline **A NOBLE ACT**.[107] Scotland reacted by ordering that no more advertisements for judicial business were to be placed with the paper. This pecuniary loss was in addition to the loss of the contract to print executive business which had been sustained by the paper in January 1832. In retaliation The Gazette launched a barrage of critical and abusive articles, accusing

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[104]*Papers on The Administration of Justice in The Crown Colonies* included in P.P. 1831-1832 (432) XXXI, 389.

[105]See for example, The Port of Spain Gazette, 14 January, 29 February, 25 March 1832.

[106]Fraser, History of Trinidad, Vol. II, 276.

[107]The Port of Spain Gazette, 2 May 1832.

Scotland of greed, corruption and nepotism.[108] This latter charge was a response to the appointment of Scotland's son to the post of acting Escribano, an office he was by law apparently too young to hold. These vitriolic attacks continued regularly for about six months until Scotland issued writs for libel on 10 November 1832. One was against the owners and editor - Henry Mills, William Stewart, and Andrew Drinan - collectively; the other was against Mills and Drinan.[109] Although the filing of charges silenced The Gazette's personal criticisms of Scotland, it did not stop the editor voicing his political opinions on other subjects. The cases took several months to come to Court. When a date was finally fixed for 26 April 1833, proceedings were further delayed by the theft of important documents connected with the case, together with $400.[110] Both cases were finally heard on 18 May, and Scotland was awarded damages of £1,200 currency. From the Government's point of view this action effectively depoliticised The Port of Spain Gazette. On 18 June, Scotland claimed the damages which he had been awarded. This constituted a severe blow to The Port of Spain Gazette and almost precipitated its closure. Between 5 and 16 July, the paper was temporarily suspended, and it appeared late on 19 July because Mills and Stewart had been imprisoned for failing to pay the damages. Somehow Mills and Stewart reached an agreement whereby the paper remained in their possession and was published from jail. It is not known with whom the two men reached this agreement, but the price exacted by the colonial Government for this arrangement was probably political quiescence. The paper had earlier commented:

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[108]Ibid. 23 May, 30 May, 9 June 1832.

[109]Ibid. 20 November 1832.

[110]Fraser, History of Trinidad, Vol. II, 335. The thieves were never found, although they were apparently friends of Drinan.

> ... although we have been permitted to retain possession of them [the press and types] until they are sold, it is only under security for very heavy penalties, and upon a pledge that we will not in our paper enter upon any political discussions of a dangerous tendency, or make remarks which may be found unpleasant to the powers that be.[111]

This censorship was probably required by the colonial Government during and after the jail sentence. The Mills-Stewart partnership did not survive six months in the Port of Spain debtors cell; it terminated on 1 January 1834.[112] Mills's involvement with The Port of Spain Gazette continued until 1870. Of William Stewart, who had endured a second lengthy imprisonment because of his involvement with the press, there is no trace until he reappeared in Dominica in 1840.

By combating The Port of Spain Gazette in this way Scotland had effectively silenced one of the most implacable opponents of the British Government in Trinidad. For the colonial Government this was an important achievement, because as a Crown colony Trinidad was without any formal institutions in which dissent could be articulated. Over twenty years previously The Trinidad Courant had help to fill this vacuum, a function that had been in turn performed by The Trinidad Gazette, The Trinidad Guardian, and then The Port of Spain Gazette. There is no substantial proof of the extent of public support for the paper, although the Governor commented on the 'considerable excitement' which prevailed in Port of Spain before the trial in May 1833.[113] However, this may have been less to do with popular indignation at an

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[111]The Port of Spain Gazette, 18 June 1833.

[112]Ibid. 4 March 1834.

[113]C.O.295/98, Hill to Stanley, 1 July 1833, no. 18.

attack on the press and more to do with dissatisfaction with the Judge conducting the case. This was Thomas Wylly, who had been appointed acting Judge in Scotland's place, despite having previously been employed by Scotland as counsel.[114] Widespread concern at the lack of judicial integrity had resurfaced once more. Despite the lack of evidence, the likelihood is that The Port of Spain Gazette was well supported by Trinidadian colonists. The mere fact that it managed to survive these political traumas is perhaps proof enough that it was solidly supported by some sections of the colonists. In comparison, the collapse of the rival Colonial Observer, because of a lack of support, shows the fragility of colonial newspapers which did not have a supportive readership.

The press conflicts which occurred in Antigua and Trinidad, although involving newspapers from opposite political poles, had much in common. Although shaped by local circumstances, they were not simple internal colonial affairs, but were largely the result of political decisions regarding the colonies which had been made in London. It was this Imperial dimension, unknown in the earlier period of press involvement in political matters, which was probably their most important characteristic. The whole tenor of press involvement in politics had been changed by the approach of abolition and the struggle for free coloured rights. These had the effect of broadening the political role of newspapers. It is for this reason that The Antigua Free Press, George Scotland, and the British Government's other supporters in the colonies are historically significant. The successes of the Scotland brothers and Henry Loving, and the growing political strength of The Watchman under Jordon and Osborn, provide small signs that by 1832 abolition had become unstoppable: some

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[114]Ibid.

degree of realignment between the ethnic groups in the West Indies was inevitable. Colonial resistance to the British Government, whether it involved the persecution of liberal newspaper editors or vituperative attacks on Crown appointees, was becoming irrelevant.

CHAPTER SIX: THE PRESS AND THE EXECUTIVE

The Governors of the British West Indian colonies were faced with an immensely difficult task in the 1820's and 1830's. All sectors of the colonial populace contributed to the difficulties that were experienced in achieving the central aim of Government - the preservation of order. At the bottom of society there was the possibility of slave unrest. The final decade of slavery saw the major organised revolts in Demerara and Jamaica, and numerous smaller disturbances in other colonies. Above the slaves in the colonial hierarchy, free blacks and free coloureds began to press for civil and political rights, heightening racial tensions in the process. The whites, as well as fighting to stave off changes imposed from London, were often engaged in bitter political infighting amongst themselves. Finally, there were inevitable problems in the actual transition from slavery to apprenticeship. The Governor had to cope with these major problems and at the same time administer the colony according to the British Government's directions.

The press played an important part in creating and sustaining the general atmosphere of crisis which permeated the colonies in the 1820's and early 1830's. Problems between Governors and newspapers were essentially ones of perspective; the Governor of a West Indian colony and the editor of a colonial paper looked at society from fundamentally different viewpoints. There is no doubt that the contempt with which some Governors viewed journalists was a result of the gulf between the two parties. On the one side, and at the apex of colonial society, were the appointees of the Crown - many of whom were military men used to orders being obeyed - entrusted with the task of managing territories which rested on coerced labour and which faced the constant threat of social instability. On the other side, and much lower in the

colonial hierarchy, were editors committed to the reporting of news, most of whom as the 1820's progressed became increasingly politicised. The basic relationship between the two was therefore inherently confrontational, but whether or not the potential for conflict was realised depended on many factors.

Complaints about the press stemmed from three of its main features. The editorial column - opinionated, brash, and often provocative - developed into a focal point in this period, and became the source of much conflict. In addition there were anonymous letters which were often the means of carrying on personal feuds, and articles reprinted from British papers concerning the slave question. Conflicts involving the press must, therefore, be considered in the light of important stylistic innovations which were largely stimulated by external pressures for social change. At the most basic level press conflict with the executive - involving newspapers across the political spectrum - can be seen as a by-product of advancing abolitionist sentiment in Britain. This contributed to a destabilising of the British Caribbean, and all of the incidents which involved the executive and the press can be traced directly or indirectly to this factor. The relationship between the colonies and the parent state had been tense since the British Government abolished the slave trade. The Slave Registration Acts further worsened the situation, and the shift in policy that was signalled by the 1823 Order in Council transformed tension into outright hostility.[1] Stimulated by these political developments, a number of avowedly political papers appeared, and others already in existence became more politically outspoken. Thus political changes in Britain had helped to produce highly political newspapers in the

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[1]Ragatz, Fall of The Planter Class, pp.276-277 and Chapters 11 and 12. See also Burns, History of The British West Indies, pp.589-593 and 611-615.

colonies. Such papers carried with them a number of significant implications for the government and security of the colonies. Conflict between the executive and the press represented one of the points at which the complexity of the white colonial dilemma between freedom of speech and self-restraint became apparent. These conflicts were, therefore, symptomatic of the bigger political conflict between colony and parent state. This chain of cause and effect which exercised such a profound influence on the colonial press should not, however, be allowed to obscure the differences which were apparent between the various conflicts involving the press. The precise nature of the conflict between the executive and the press was determined by several factors: the political orientation of the newspapers involved; their location in Legislative or Crown colonies; the recent history of the colony; and the personalities of the Governor and editors involved. The interaction of these factors helped to shape the conflict between the two parties.

Some planter newspapers tended to frame the political situation in simple terms. The Governor was the representative of the British Government which was trying to impose changes on the colonies; white colonists opposed these changes and it was the function of their newspapers to reflect that opposition. The potential for conflict between the executive and the press evolved into outright hostility in Trinidad in 1825 and again in 1832. This provides a chronological record of the escalating tension between Trinidadian colonists and the British Government. In 1825, the Governor of Trinidad, Sir Ralph Woodford faced a situation that would also beset his successor Sir Lewis Grant seven years later. The initially placid Trinidad Gazette had been politically energised by measures introduced by the British Government into the colony. In this case it was the Order in Council of March 1823 that was aimed at

ameliorating conditions for the slaves. Woodford obviously anticipated that this Order in Council would meet with widespread dissatisfaction. He explained to the editor of The Gazette that temperate discussions of the legislation were acceptable, but the two men obviously disagreed on what constituted a temperate discussion. Woodford, who had a reputation for leaning on press indiscretions,[2] claimed that the editor refused to adhere to such moderation. The Governor faced an additional concern in that the proprietor of the paper, William Lewer, was also official printer for the colonial Government. Woodford was aware of the incongruous nature of this arrangement, and of the potential political embarrassment the paper's disregard for his instructions might cause:

> It has however, so widely departed from this caution, and for some months past has exhibited such a continued series of the most virulent remarks on the Order in Council as well as the most exaggerated statements of facts connected with it, as to have induced me to apprehend that from its continuing to appear as a Government paper, the public in this and in other colonies might be led to conclude that I encouraged it.[3]

By March 1825 Woodford felt the situation was getting out of control. On 24 March he sacked Lewer from his post as Government printer,[4] but hesitated before censoring The Trinidad Gazette. Woodford sought the sanction of the Secretary of State, which he duly received, but the paper closed in September 1825 before the Governor had reached any decision on censorship.

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[2]Carmichael, History of Trinidad And Tobago, p.369.

[3]C.O.295/65, Woodford to Bathurst, 7 May 1825, no. 619.

[4]Cave, 'The First Trinidad Guardian,' p.61.

Seven years later relations between Trinidad and the British Government had deteriorated markedly and this was reflected in the executive-press relationship. When Sir Lewis Grant became Governor of Trinidad in 1829 The Port of Spain Gazette, the successor to The Trinidad Gazette, was editorially moribund. The more aggressive of the Trinidadian papers was The Trinidad Guardian, which highlighted its rival's lack of political independence by calling it *The Official*. The Guardian closed in November 1831 just before the colony received news of the Order in Council that was supposed to consolidate the 1823 Order. Soon after these two events The Port of Spain Gazette assumed the role of a politically aggressive planter paper. The Gazette admitted that some of its past editorials had been lacking in commitment to the planter cause:

> That last paper [31 December 1831 issue] struck us, at the moment, as being not an unapt type of the *"half measures"* of our double dealing "friends", so far as the welfare of this colony is concerned. We beg not to be misunderstood in what we are saying. We profess ourselves devoted servants of our Sovereign; but we cannot help feeling our bosoms swell with indignation "when memory brings us back again", the unjust and most injurious line of conduct pursued towards us by Ministers throughout the year that has now passed away into the abyss of time.[5]

This signalled the start of an increasing degree of editorial aggression which gained momentum throughout 1832. At almost exactly the same time that this politicisation started, Governor Grant made a decision which further stimulated it and ultimately increased the paper's belligerence. On 19 January 1832 Grant publicly announced the cancellation of the contract to print executive business and advertisements which The

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[5]The Port of Spain Gazette, 4 January 1832.

Port of Spain Gazette had held since opening in September 1825.[6] In a show of editorial bravado, The Gazette dismissed the financial injury as amounting to only £170 a year.[7] A truer indication of the importance of this money was probably shown a month later when the paper printed an editorial appeal to subscribers who were in arrears:

> ... none of their friends can plead ignorance to the heavy blow inflicted on them by the Executive.[8]

Grant claimed that his motives were purely financial. The Gazette had charged £75 sterling for printing the November Order in Council and a supplementary proclamation. This rate was deemed intolerable, especially as a project was under way to collate and publish a comprehensive edition of the colony's laws, which would have proved extremely expensive.[9] Grant informed the proprietors of The Port of Spain Gazette that they would be required to print the legal work free, and pointed out that they still retained the printing business for the judiciary and the cabildo. John Holman and Henry Mills refused to accept this, and as a result Grant cancelled the contract and helped to set up The Royal Gazette. This new paper was to print all Government work free under certain advantageous conditions.

There was, therefore, apparently no political calculation in Grant's mind when he first made his decision, although there were rumours that he had acted on the

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[6]C.O.295/98, Hill to Stanley, 1 July 1833, no. 20.

[7]The Port of Spain Gazette, 21 January 1832.

[8]Ibid. 15 February 1832.

[9]C.O.295/93, Grant to Howick, 27 July 1832, private.

orders of the Colonial Office.[10] Grant claimed to have been ready to overlook Holman and Mills's annoyance, and stated his ultimate aim was either for a merger of The Royal Gazette and The Port of Spain Gazette, or for the printing eventually to revert back to the latter. The proprietors of The Port of Spain Gazette made two offers to continue printing Government business, firstly by a reduction of 20% on its former rate, and then by a 50% reduction.[11] Grant refused to consider either, and the paper took this as proof that his real motives were other than financial:

> We cannot help being impressed with the idea that His Excellency must have some other motive than the one assigned, for withdrawing from us His Excellency's countenance and support. Economy is out of the question ...[12]

Thus, The Port of Spain Gazette presented the withdrawal of the contract as a politically motivated decision; a reprisal for the paper publicising a meeting of planters called in opposition to the November Order in Council. Other colonial papers relied on this version of events, and Grant's decision was widely portrayed as being politically motivated.[13] The decision proved politically costly for Grant - it helped to provoke an editorial campaign of vilification from The Port of Spain Gazette against his administration. Grant had inadvertently transformed a financial issue into a political issue, in the process helping to crystallise The Port of Spain Gazette's bellicose opposition to the measures of the British Government and to himself personally. In a short time Grant's originally neutral attitude to The Port of Spain

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[10]Fraser, History of Trinidad, Vol. II, 265; The Port of Spain Gazette, 14 December 1832.

[11]The Port of Spain Gazette, 7 March 1832.

[12]Ibid.

[13]See The Grenada Free Press, 1 February 1832; The Barbados Globe, 9 February 1832.

Gazette became much more political. The envisaged merger between the two rival papers proved impossible because of the press war between them. This reached such a pitch that Grant became hostile to both papers and decried the:

> ... personalities and scurrilities of a description that, for the time, has put it out of the question to give countenance to the Port D. Esp. [sic] and made me disclaim as well as I could any sort of sanction on my part being given to those which appeared in the Royal Gaz. [sic]...[14]

Throughout 1832 and into 1833 The Port of Spain Gazette published a number editorials which constituted a series of excoriating attacks on the British Government, the Order in Council, the Trinidadian Chief Justice, and Governor Grant. Grant was accused of sending deliberately misleading despatches to London.[15] His administration was criticised as a 'system of hesitation, indecision, and procrastination', and for being riddled with patronage for the Governor's friends.[16] In January 1833, the paper published several articles by James McQueen, who was in the colony at the time. Two of these were letters directly addressed to Grant accusing him of ineptitude and traitorous conduct towards the colony because of his alleged support for The Colonial Observer - the paper which had replaced The Royal Gazette.[17] In February 1833, news reached Trinidad that Grant was to be relieved of his post. The Port of Spain Gazette reacted with delight:

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[14]C.O.295/93, Grant to Howick, 27 July 1832, private.

[15]The Port of Spain Gazette, 12 May 1832.

[16]Ibid. 6, 23 June 1832.

[17]Ibid. 25, 29 January 1833.

> What a number of *dry eyes* and *wet* throats Sir Lewis will leave after him throughout this island on his (we trust) final departure from it. For our parts, we will hold a Jubilee on that day.[18]

This came from a paper, which a year previously had described Grant as 'an intelligent, a wise, and a beloved Governor.'[19] The paper's sniping did not cease during the winding-down period of Grant's administration. A murder and a suicide in the colony were blamed on the Governor's 'indolence', and the vilification culminated in The Port of Spain Gazette describing Grant after his departure from the colony as:

> ... hated by the negroes and detested by every independent member of the community. May we never look upon his like again...[20]

It is difficult to say exactly how much of this vituperation was the result of a genuine political dissatisfaction with Grant's administration, and how much stemmed solely from his decision to cancel the printing contract. The loss of the contract had certainly added vehemence to the paper's criticism, but it is clear that Grant was an unpopular Governor struggling with numerous problems. A late nineteenth century historian described Grant as 'a weak man of a vacillating disposition, unable to form an opinion of his own and equally unable to adhere to one formed for him...'[21] In contrast, a modern historian of Trinidad has come to a different conclusion, impressed by Grant's efforts to counter planter intransigence.[22] During the early part of 1832

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[18]Ibid. 26 February 1833.

[19]Ibid. 4 January 1832.

[20]Ibid. 23 April 1833.

[21]Fraser, History of Trinidad, Vol. II, 325.

[22]Brereton, History of Trinidad, p.57.

Grant was faced with determined planter opposition to the November Order in Council, and there had also been strikes by slaves on certain plantations, reports of arson, and rumours of insurrection.[23] In June, Grant wrote to Goderich:

> It is impossible for me to describe or give an idea to Your Lordship of the multifarious and disreputable obstacles which are constantly here being thrown in the way to counteract and impede the measures of Government...[24]

It is therefore likely that at some point The Port of Spain Gazette would have reflected the popular clamour against Grant's administration even if it had never lost the contract. The ferocity of the paper's criticism was compounded in May 1832 when the paper suffered its second financial loss because of the Chief Justice's decision to withdraw all judicial advertisements from the paper.

The external stimulus to The Gazette's aggression provided by the November Order in Council had been exacerbated by Grant's decision to cancel the contract. This imparted a particular intensity to the conflict which Grant did nothing to combat. Such inactivity on the part of the executive contrasted with Guiana in 1834, when a clash between the Governor and a planter paper became personalised in a libel case. However, in a sense this was deceptive; the same basic chain of political causes that had occurred in Trinidad can also be seen in Guiana. In October 1834, the Governor of Guiana, Sir James Carmichael-Smyth sued Alexander Stevenson of The Guiana Chronicle for libel. By its nature libel has a personal edge to it, but the origins of this case were rooted in the same basic political conflict that had arisen in Trinidad.

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[23]C.O.295/92, for the despatch relating to planter opposition to the November Order in Council see Grant to Goderich, 18 February 1832, private. For those relating to strike action by slaves and rumours of insurrection see nos. 8, 9, 14, 27, and private despatches of 4 February, 26 March, 26 May 1832.

[24]Ibid. Grant to Goderich, 8 June 1832, no. 27.

Having served in the Bahamas for four years Smyth arrived in Guiana in June 1833 at a critical time for the colony, but he was initially optimistic. He wrote in his first despatch, 'I do not anticipate any great difficulty in preserving peace and good order throughout Guiana.'[25] This was to prove a misjudgment as he came to face determined opposition from a large group of colonists. Smyth's libel suit against Alexander Stevenson stemmed from the unrest of former slaves which followed abolition on 1 August 1834. Smyth's measures to quell these disturbances were highly controversial. Smyth went against the advice of many colonists by refusing to proclaim martial law during the disturbances - a step which he said would be of only 'temporary or ephemeral effect.'[26] Smyth further affronted planter sensibilities by insisting that a lasting solution to the unrest lay with the planters adjusting to apprenticeship by making compromises favourable to the former slaves, rather than by the traditional coercive means. Smyth's efforts were dismissed as inadequate by many colonists, and there seems to have been a widespread feeling that he had been too lenient in dealing with the slaves before abolition and that the same leniency was being applied to the August insurgents.[27] During and after the unrest Smyth's administration was engulfed by a wave of criticism, which culminated in a memorial signed by over seven hundred colonists ascribing the state of the colony to:

> ... an imprudent, agitating, and unwise system of Government on the part of His Excellency the Governor... [which had led to] dissatisfaction in the minds of the labouring population, to break the ties of mutual confidence between

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[25]C.O.111/127, Carmichael-Smyth to Stanley, 27 June 1833, no. 1.

[26]C.O.111/133, proclamation of 16 August 1834, reprinted in The Guiana Chronicle, 10 October 1834, enclosed with no. 54.

[27]See Daly, Short History of The Guyanese People, pp.169-170.

> master and servant, and to engender a spirit of hostility in classes of His Majesty's subjects who can have but one common interest in the preservation of order and the promotion of agricultural industry.[28]

There was a basic similarity between this case and Sir Lewis Grant's difficulties in Trinidad. Both were the result of polarised political positions that were irreconcilable. Smyth's conduct was in keeping with the general line of thought at the Colonial Office, where the influence of James Stephen and Henry Taylor was still strong. Smyth obviously felt that the apprentices could not be treated as if they were still slaves. He faced massed planter opposition which was accustomed to coercion as being the only way to deal with insubordination. Conflict was the inevitable outcome of this clash of political positions, and the libel suit against The Guiana Chronicle was one of the mechanisms by which the conflict was played out.

In spite of the contextual similarity, the roles of the Trinidadian and Guianan press in these events were not entirely comparable. The critical editorial stance of The Port of Spain Gazette had been a recent development, stimulated by events in Britain and by Governor Grant's decision over the printing contract. In contrast, The Guiana Chronicle had proved adept for over a decade at provoking the executive and inevitably it was a central agent in the vilification of Smyth's Government. The immediate source of contention was not editorial - Smyth sued the proprietor of the paper for libels which had appeared in two pseudonymous letters published in The Guiana Chronicle on 27 August 1834. Among other things, these accused Smyth of being unfit to head the Government of the colony, neglect of duty, and of acting

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[28]C.O.111/133, petition of colonists enclosed with no. 54.

illegally.[29] The trial lasted between 6 and 8 October, and ended with Stevenson's acquittal by majority not guilty verdicts from the two Judges and three Assessors against the guilty verdict of the Chief Justice.[30]

In the face of an editorial onslaught that was similar to that endured by Smyth in Guiana it is somewhat surprising that Sir Lewis Grant did not take the proprietors of The Port of Spain Gazette to court, or censor the paper as he was entitled to do under Spanish law. Sir Ralph Woodford had been prepared to censor The Trinidad Gazette in 1825, and unlike Grant it is clear that Woodford's decision to cancel the printing contract was politically motivated by his disapproval of The Gazette. The politicisation of the various Governmental printing contracts and their use as levers of control were features of colonial politics in this period. The contract to print business for the executive in St. Vincent was a contentious political issue for a decade. In December 1825, the Governor of St. Vincent wrote a private letter to the Colonial Office expressing his intention of starting a newspaper to deprive the existing paper of the profits from executive printing. Governor Brisbane's problem was that at this time The St. Vincent Advertiser was the only paper published in the colony. If maximum publicity for important proclamations and so forth was needed the Governor had no option but to use the paper. John Drape, the proprietor and editor of The St. Vincent Advertiser, had enjoyed the financial benefits from printing work for the executive since February 1818, but recent editorial provocation had resulted in disturbances in the colony. Governor Brisbane did not specifically mention what the

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[29]The Guiana Chronicle, 27 August 1834. Reprints in The Chronicle of 10 October are enclosed in C.O.111/133, no. 54. The letters were signed *Detector* and *Equal Justice*.

[30]Ibid. The Chronicle of 10, 13, 15 October 1834, carried transcripts of court proceedings.

paper was publishing that was so contentious, but it seemed to involve libellous attacks on public and private individuals. Brisbane's reference to Drape's 'continued radicalism' suggests a root political cause to the situation, but the precise nature of this radicalism has not come to light.[31]

Brisbane's attempt to establish a rival paper was successful; The St. Vincent Royal Gazette began publication in February 1826, with Thomas LeGall as proprietor and editor. The two papers remained bitter rivals for many years. The name of LeGall's paper proved contentious, but the main point of dispute between them was over which paper was legally entitled to print the colony's laws. This issue was only resolved when the Lt. Governor awarded the executive commission to The St. Vincent Chronicle in February 1835. Brisbane's revocation of Drape's commission in 1825 had been politically-motivated, but this second cancellation, although similar in some respects, was not determined by such overtly political concerns.[32] Following the collapse of an injunction in August 1834 against The St. Vincent Advertiser by which means he had attempted to stop the illegal printing of work which was officially his, Thomas LeGall published an editorial critical of proceedings in Court. This earned him a reprimand from the Lt. Governor which included a threat to revoke the printing commission if LeGall did not print an apology to the colony's Chief Justice. An apology was printed, but LeGall was then faced with a demand from the Lt. Governor for a new tender if he wanted to continue as executive printer. In response LeGall offered to print all executive work free of charge - an offer which was accepted on

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[31]C.O.260/42, Brisbane to Wilmot-Horton, 27 December 1825, private. There are no extant papers from St. Vincent covering this period.

[32]For the details of this incident see The St. Vincent Royal Gazette, 12, 19 February 1835.

23 October 1834. LeGall was obviously dissatisfied with this treatment, which had included executive pressures on editorial freedom. On 12 February 1835, he published in The St. Vincent Royal Gazette all the correspondence which had passed between himself and the Lt. Governor, together with a lengthy memorial of grievance to the Colonial Office. The response from Government House was immediate; LeGall's commission to print executive work free of charge was revoked on 16 February 1835. Ten years previously, the politicisation of executive printing work had occurred because of Governor Brisbane's concerns about the disruption caused by The St. Vincent Advertiser. The political importance of the press in this respect dwindled as the issue dragged on, until by late 1834 it had become little more than a way for the Lt. Governor to punish the press for criticising members of the colonial Government.

The politicisation of executive printing work was also clearly evident in Trinidad. Unlike in St. Vincent larger political developments remained at the forefront of the issue, and it never degenerated into mere personal feuding. The Colonial Observer lost executive printing work in July 1833, when Sir George Hill decided to withdraw it. The contract had become a sensitive issue after The Royal Gazette affair. The Observer had been given Government printing after The Royal Gazette had closed and Sir Lewis Grant refused to return it to The Port of Spain Gazette. There is no indication why Government printing had to be done by a privately-owned newspaper, although there were rumours in the colony that Anderson was Grant's protege.[33] There is no proof of this patronage other than Anderson being awarded the contract, and if he really was under Grant's protection he expressed no gratitude. After Grant

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[33]See The Port of Spain Gazette, 30 April 1833; C.O. 295/98, Hill to Stanley, 1 July 1833, no. 20; Hill to Stanley, 29 August 1833, unnumbered despatch.

left the colony Anderson accused him of failing to do him justice over a dispute in the militia.[34] Grant's decision over the contract seems rather naive. He had already been mistaken in his belief that The Royal Gazette would be conducted in a moderate tone, and his decision to award the contract to a private paper run by the same man that had caused trouble once before was either proof of patronage or a misjudgment. As with The Royal Gazette, Young Anderson quickly departed from the pledge of moderation made in the prospectus for The Colonial Observer.[35] Grant did nothing to punish the paper because of this, which further adds substance to the rumours about Grant favouring Anderson. There is no indication at all why Grant did not circumvent the potential political embarrassments that shielding a controversial newspaper could cause simply by creating an official Government newssheet. It could then cover the printing work from all Government departments, and be devoid of political content. Once Grant left the colony, Anderson lost his patron and Sir George Hill had no hesitation in adopting this solution to the problems posed by The Observer. Hill set up a second Royal Gazette in July 1833, and insisted that all Government business was to be printed in this paper.[36] In so doing Hill was probably influenced by his time as Governor of St. Vincent, where in 1832 he had had to deal with the troublesome consequences of having public printing work done by the private press. A year later, and faced with a situation that looked like a repeat of this, Hill decided to tackle the problem by completely restructuring the mode of carrying out executive printing. At

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[34]C.O.295/98, Anderson to Stanley, 21 July 1833, enclosed with Hill to Stanley 29 August 1833, unnumbered despatch. For details of the dispute in the militia see below pp.277-282.

[35]C.O.295/93, Grant to Howick, 27 July 1832, private. This contains a copy of the prospectus for The Colonial Observer, dated 1 August 1832.

[36]C.O.295/99, Hill to Lefevre, 2 November 1833, no. 58.

a stroke he had depoliticised the printing contract and incurred the opposition of The Observer. In a situation similar to that which Grant had faced with The Port of Spain Gazette, Hill claimed that his decision lay behind much of The Observer's criticism of his administration:

> In truth Mr Anderson's real grievances arise from my carrying on the Government disconnected with Party or the Press.[37]

The conflicts between The Port of Spain Gazette and Governor Grant, and The Guiana Chronicle and Governor Smyth were symptoms of a deeper malaise afflicting this part of the Empire. The essence of the colonists' complaints was that the Governors concerned had performed their duties without taking note of planter influence. This was dressed up in various guises; Grant was accused of negligence and ineptitude, and Smyth of weakness, but at the root of the complaint was executive independence. The planter press contributed by helping to articulate and then sustain the opposition to Grant and Smyth. In contrast, the political nature of the executive-press relationship was placed on a completely different footing by the content of newspapers at the other end of the political spectrum. As with the planter press, political changes in Britain had helped to produce this group of colonial newspapers. However, unlike with the planter press it could plausibly be argued that the relationship between these papers and the colonial Governors should have been complementary. The Governor represented the British Government and all of the colonial liberal papers supported the policies of that Government. In theory, there should have been a mutually beneficial relationship between the parties. In fact, this was often not the case, and relations between Governors and liberal papers were as

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[37]C.O.295/98, Hill to Stanley, 29 August 1833, unnumbered despatch.

fraught and strained as with the planter press. A paradoxical situation arose: the acute tensions of the colonial situation at this time meant that the liberal press - ostensibly on the Governor's side - produced similar results to the most extreme planter papers. Newspapers of all political colours ended up presenting the same problem of political disruption for a Governor. The difference was that the planter press and the liberal press arrived at the same result from different political starting points. The planter press in Demerara and Jamaica was widely blamed for the 1823 and 1832 revolts; the Governor of Antigua and the Grand Jury of that island blamed the liberal press for the slave disturbances in March 1831, and further unrest was anticipated from the influence of The Free Press and The Weekly Register[38]; The Port of Spain Gazette blamed illicit distribution of The Colonial Observer amongst slaves for strike action in early 1833.[39]

In the case of three of the liberal four, the planter grievance about Governors actually doing their job was inverted. Claims put forward by James Scotland Snr., Henry Loving, and Young Anderson describe a situation where they were persecuted personally because they campaigned with their newspapers in support of the British Government's West India policy. Further, and more seriously, the Governors were said to have obstructed the implementation of those measures. In short, the executive was accused of losing a sense of independent judgement and of having fallen under the control of the planters. To Scotland, Loving, and Anderson the corruption of executive independence by the planters was the root cause of the conflicts in which they found

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[38]C.O.7/31, Ross to Goderich, 1 April 1831, no. 11; The Presentment of the Antiguan Grand Jury to the Court of King's Bench, 4 October 1831, enclosed with no. 33; C.O.7/34, Ross to Goderich, 8 November 1832, no. 60.

[39]The Port of Spain Gazette, 30 April 1833.

themselves embroiled. To the Governors the problem was how to contain the political disruption caused by newspapers which from their point of view were doing more harm than good.

Although the press conflicts which occurred in Antigua in the early 1830's were not fought primarily between the executive and the press the Governor invariably became involved. The Governor of Antigua, Sir Patrick Ross, had to cope with the activities of two high-profile newspapers. The tension which arose between the Governor and these papers was readily apparent. Ross was openly accused by both James Scotland Snr. and Henry Loving of being compliant to planter control, while Ross regarded both men and their papers as political liabilities. James Scotland Snr. based his assertions of executive complicity on several instances of alleged partiality of judgement which affected him personally. Henry Loving grounded his accusations of executive compliance with the planters on Ross allegedly having neglected the interests of the free coloureds. There is evidence which confirms that Ross viewed the Antiguan liberal press as a serious political nuisance, and there is also evidence of his social familiarity with the planters. The case for Ross as a 'planter's Governor' is therefore very plausible, but a clue to the real nature of his Governorship can be found in a contemporary source. This claimed Ross was anxious not to excite political controversy among the planters:

> His Excellency arrived at Antigua in the year 1826, and during his stay there, ingratiated himself with the *heads of the island*, by his courteous manners, and his humane desire to spare their feelings upon the all-engrossing topic of approaching emancipation.[40]

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[40]Flannigan, Antigua And The Antiguans, Vol. I, 146

In the light of this comment Ross's conduct towards the Antiguan press appears based on pragmatic considerations about the state of the colony on the eve of abolition. Ross seems to have decided that the impact of political newspapers such as The Antigua Free Press and The Weekly Register did more harm than good, but this apparent dislike of disruptive newspapers did not only apply to papers committed to emancipation. That this was the case is supported by Ross's treatment of Robert Priest. When The Antigua Free Press had been under the control of Priest it had been a solid supporter of the planters. However, its campaign for judicial reform in the colony had caused considerable excitement amongst whites. As Chancellor of the Antiguan Court of Chancery Ross had been involved in the jailing of Robert Priest on 13 April 1829, and on 30 May it was Ross who moved that Priest had expiated his offence and should be released.[41] This suggests that Ross was a man who distrusted newspapers of all political colours if they caused difficulties in governing the colony. With regard to James Scotland's Free Press and The Register, Ross does not seem to have completely disapproved of their politics, but he does seem to have felt that propounding such radical beliefs in the colonies was pointless; whites would not change their minds because of a press campaign, and the effects on the slaves had been shown by the March 1831 unrest. In Ross's view social disruption from both planter and liberal newspapers was equally damaging. This analysis might go some way to explaining why Ross tolerated the imprisonment in very dubious circumstances of both Robert Priest and James Scotland Snr. - men whose political beliefs lay at opposite ends of the contemporary spectrum.

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[41]See The Antigua Free Press, 17 April, 5 June 1829.

In James Scotland Snr.'s case the evidence against Ross for negligent conduct is extensive. Firstly, there was his refusal to exercise his prerogative and release Scotland from the six month jail sentence passed by the Court of King's Bench on 26 October 1831. Scotland petitioned Ross on 29 October and received a short note the following day from the Governor's Secretary, Charles Taylor. This informed Scotland that Ross saw no reason to intervene in the case. Ross based his refusal to intervene on a rejection of Scotland's claim that the Antiguan Grand Jury and Court of King's Bench had acted illegally. Having decided that there was no premise for redress Ross wrote in his official despatch:

> ... I am not aware of any other circumstance in support [?] of the conduct of the memorialist as editor of The Free Press which could induce me to support his prayer.[42]

This comment gives some credence to Scotland's view that he was being victimised because of Ross's disapproval of the political stance of The Free Press. Scotland thought this disapproval had been created by Ross constantly socialising with the planting class. In early December Scotland complained in The Free Press about Ross's decision not to release him. He alleged that Ross had given his original petition only a cursory reading, because of 'the undue ascendancy of the oligarchy over his Excellency's mind.'[43] Scotland further claimed that until Ross disengaged himself from the pernicious effects of socially mixing with the planter class, Antiguan society would not be able to develop.

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[42]C.O.7/31, Ross to Goderich, 15 November 1831, no. 33.

[43]The Antigua Free Press, 8 December 1831.

Following his failure with the local executive, on 2 November Scotland wrote a petition to the Secretary of State, Lord Goderich. This contained an outline of events up to that point as Scotland saw them and he forwarded a copy to the President of the Court which had imprisoned him to enable the Judges to write a reply.[44] After two weeks waiting for a response Scotland wrote to Ross twice, urging him to order the Judges of the Court to reply to the petition. While this correspondence was going on, Scotland's imprisonment was, of course, being prolonged; this further convinced him of collusion between the Governor and planters. The circumstances surrounding the alleged conspiracy against The Free Press could also be taken as proof that Ross treated Scotland unfairly. Ross's reaction to Scotland's plea for protection was dismissive. Through his Secretary, Ross expressed concern at Scotland's allegations, but claimed any interference on the part of the executive would have been unconstitutional. Ross simply referred Scotland to the legal authorities; the same people who had imprisoned him several weeks previously. Taylor added:

> ... should any actual necessity arise for the interposition of the Executive authority in your behalf, (of which he cannot at present permit himself to entertain the least apprehension,) it will of course be promptly afforded, to render you that effective support and protection which you have a right to expect, against any public outrage.[45]

No evidence has been found wherein Ross specifically admits that he approved on political grounds of the Antiguan judiciary's treatment of Scotland. This would

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[44]C.O.7/32. Offices And Individuals. There is a section devoted to this case containing all the relevant documents.

[45]Ibid. Taylor to Scotland, 18 December 1831.

have amounted to a complete endorsement of planter political thought. However, his conduct regarding Scotland does suggest at least a partial endorsement. It is likely that Ross was aware of the benefits which he might derive from the planters persecuting Scotland. The Antigua Free Press was a source of constant political controversy at a difficult point in the colony's development. Instead of seeing the paper as an ally in the struggle to introduce the British Government's measures into the colony, Ross saw it as a political liability which did more harm than good. After the March slave disturbances Ross wrote in a clear reference to the Antiguan liberal press:

> The tenor of the publications and speeches of the injudicious advocates for immediate freedom have been invidiously and too successfully circulated amongst them [the slaves], and the only consequences that could be expected thereupon are now too distinctly becoming apparent.[46]

In December 1831 Ross wrote another despatch refuting 'the unfounded representations preferred against me... in the columns of the Free Press newspaper.'[47] By refusing to intervene in Scotland's favour it may have been that Ross was attempting to persuade Scotland to reconsider the political stance of his paper. A spell in jail might have convinced Scotland to moderate the political stance of the paper for the sake of the colony's stability, just as Robert Priest's imprisonment had dampened some of his editorial fire. Ross's refusal to intervene directly in the Scotland case may also have been a calculated political decision because it shifted the onus to justify what had happened to Scotland onto the people who had sent him to prison; the Grand Jury, the Judges, and the Attorney General. While the affair was being concluded all

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[46]C.O.7/31, Ross to Goderich, 1 April 1831, no. 11.

[47]Ibid. Ross to Goderich, 20 December 1831, no. 39.

of these were required by the Secretary of State to explain their conduct. Ross was spared this, although he was severely criticised for 'inadequately' performing his duty.[48]

There are other signs that Ross's negligence was an attempt to tone down the political content of the liberal press. Foremost among this evidence is Ross's reaction to the political activities of Henry Loving. While Scotland was struggling with the Antiguan judiciary, Loving was in England lobbying at the Colonial Office for free coloured civil and political rights. Loving shared the view that was prevalent among some Antiguan free coloureds that the close association Ross had with the planter class had meant continued discrimination against them:

> I have not come to England for the purpose of representing the extraordinary intimacy which exists between His Excellency and the Oligarchy of the island; though my constituents could, with much justice, complain, that prior to the present year His Excellency never took the trouble to urge upon the other branches of the Legislature the necessity of granting the claims of the Free People.[49]

Ross emphatically denied this allegation and sent numerous documents to the Colonial Office to refute it. For some reason, before 1831 Ross's efforts on behalf of free coloureds had been made in private, but by April 1831, Ross was intimating to the Antiguan Legislature that free coloured claims deserved serious consideration. After

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[48]C.O.393/3, Goderich to Ross, 2 January 1832, no. 21.

[49]C.O.7/34, Loving to Goderich, 27 September 1831. Included in a pamphlet, entitled Correspondence With The Right Hon. Viscount Goderich, Secretary of State For The Colonies, on The Subject of The Political Rights of The Free Coloured And Black Inhabitants of The Island of Antigua. By Henry Loving - A Man of Colour, And The Delegate of His Brethren, London 1832. A copy of this pamphlet is enclosed with no. 60.

the March disturbances, Ross made a point of addressing the Legislature to praise the role of free coloured militiamen in quelling the unrest:

> The loyal and patriotic spirit so conspicuously evinced during the late period of unusual fatigue and deprivation by the free people of colour who compose so large a portion of the militia force has called forth my unqualified approbation, and has, in my opinion, given them a strong additional claim to the favourable considerations of your Honorable Houses, and to the public gratitude.[50]

This goes some way to proving that Ross was not quite the intractable opponent of free coloured rights that many of them thought, although he was dismayed by the free coloured disturbances which quickly followed the slave unrest.[51] It could also be taken as a sign that Ross had no intrinsic hostility to the politics of The Free Press and The Register; only their application in ways and in circumstances likely to undermine his administration. After Ross's efforts in private had come to light, the secretary of the committee which had sent Loving to London expressed regret that he had blamed Ross for the slow progress of free coloured interests.[52] The effects on Ross of The Antigua Free Press and Loving were clear - he was forced onto the political defensive. The Anti-Slavery Reporter of 25 October 1831, which reached Antigua, contained a highly critical review of Ross's Governorship, to which he was forced to respond officially.[53] In addition Ross wrote a total of four other despatches

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[50]C.O.7/31, Address of Sir Patrick Ross to the Antiguan Legislature, 7 April 1831, enclosed with no. 15.

[51]Ibid. Ross to Goderich, 19 December 1831, no. 37.

[52]C.O.7/33, George Cranston to Loving, 19 December 1831, enclosed with no. 8.

[53]C.O.7/31, Ross to Goderich, 20 December 1831, no. 39.

to the Colonial Office to refute the allegations that had been levelled against his administration.[54]

Sir Patrick Ross's refusal to intervene and release Robert Priest and James Scotland Snr. contrasts with the attitude of his successor, Sir Evan MacGregor. In 1835, as Governor of the Leewards, MacGregor intervened to release Samuel Cable of The St. Kitts Advertiser on the grounds that Cable had made a full apology for the supposed contempt he had shown towards the Court of King's Bench.[55] MacGregor's prompt action may have been due to the fact that the tension affecting the colonies before 1834 had been to some extent dissipated by abolition. Liberal papers could still generate tensions - as this case proved - but not to the same degree as in 1831 and 1832. The different reactions of Ross and MacGregor may simply have resulted from their different political beliefs. In contrast to Ross's evident irritation with Scotland and Loving, MacGregor recommended Scotland as a Stipendiary Magistrate, and had a high regard for Henry Loving's abilities.[56]

Charges of executive compliance with planter extremism were also made in Trinidad by Young Anderson against Sir George Hill. Hill chose to confront the disruption Anderson's newspaper was causing in the colony by removing the Government printing contract, which was the paper's key financial prop. Anderson responded by attacking the Governor in The Observer, and by accusing him of reprisals against the only newspaper in the colony which supported the British Govern-

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[54]C.O.7/31, no. 37; C.O.7/33, nos. 6, 8; and C.O.7/34, no. 60.

[55]C.O.239/40, MacGregor to Glenelg, 16 October 1835, no. 205, contains all the relevant documents for this case.

[56]C.O.7/36, MacGregor to Stanley, 31 August 1833, no. 117; C.O.7/43, MacGregor to Glenelg, 15 March 1836, no. 50.

ment. Anderson twice made the claim that Hill had been willingly co-opted into an extreme planter faction. The second claim detailed an alleged attempt that had been made by this combination to destroy The Colonial Observer:

> ... the faction... availed themselves of my temporary absence from Town, to forward certain false and malicious statements to His Excellency Sir George Hill, which, I regret to say, His Excellency hastened to transmit to the Colonial Office in Downing Street, by the last packet:- trusting (but as I hope vainly), that you, Rt. Honorable Sir, would direct my paper to be suppressed without affording me the privilege of defense.[57]

The allegations made against Ross and Hill were probably a product of the heightened political tension of the time. At most Ross and Hill were open to a certain amount of manipulation by the planters, as were all Crown appointees. There is no evidence for it, and it would seem very unlikely that any concerted attempts were ever made by planters and Governors to sabotage the plans of the British Government. In Antigua it appears that Sir Patrick Ross's views of the Antiguan press as a political liability did become partially wedded to the aims of the more extreme planters. There were, however, limits to the extent that this convenient marriage of interests could go. For example, Ross did not order the suppression of The Antigua Free Press. Scotland was allowed to organise publication of the paper from his jail cell. The outright suppression of a newspaper was not really a feasible option in a colony which had a constitutional structure somewhat analogous to the parent state's. None of the Legislative colonies appear to have had laws which restricted the freedom of the press.

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[57]C.O.295/99, Anderson to Stanley, 25 November 1833, enclosed with Hill to Stanley, 25 November 1833, unnumbered despatch. Anderson had first made the claim in his letter to Stanley of 21 July 1833, enclosed in C.O.295/98, Hill to Stanley, 29 August 1833, unnumbered despatch.

There were attempts made in this period in Dominica and Jamaica to introduce legislation which would curb press freedom, but both failed. In the case of Dominica, the Governor refused his assent to a Bill restricting the freedom of the press (a reaction to the Demeraran slave revolt), which passed the Assembly in December 1823.[58] A law passed by the Jamaican Assembly in May 1832 was basically aimed at gagging The Watchman. James Stephen at the Colonial Office used his influence to ensure that the Act never became law.[59]

The relative clarity of the legal position of the press in the Legislative colonies contrasts with the situation in the Crown colonies. In the latter the appearance of political newspapers occurred in conditions that were quite distinct from the Legislative colonies, where there was a generally-held view about the niche which newspapers occupied. In contrast, legal and administrative confusion pervaded the Government of the Crown colonies. This made the position of the press highly problematic for the authorities. The uncertainty concerning the press in Trinidad, Demerara-Essequibo, Berbice, and St. Lucia must be considered within the context of anglicization which took place in the Government of these colonies throughout the nineteenth century. In the 1820's the process had barely begun, and although the Crown colonies were at varying stages of development, the gradual encroachment of 'English ways' was always long and difficult. Thus, the implications for the Government and security of the Crown colonies carried in the rise of political

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[58]C.O.71/61, Huntingdon to Bathurst, 11 January 1824, no. 86.

[59]C.O.323/48, report by James Stephen (Legal advisor to the Colonial Office, 1813 to 1836; Under Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, 1836 to 1849), on Jamaican Act no. 3,061.

newspapers were superimposed onto a process of constitutional evolution that had only just started.

The Governors of these territories presided over political institutions and social structures which were radically different both to each other and to the older Legislative colonies. In Demerara-Essequibo and Berbice, Trinidad, and St. Lucia, Britain had inherited foreign traditions of Government which were retained for many years after these colonies were ceded, altered only by piecemeal changes. In Trinidad, for example, Spanish law remained in force until the 1840's, some forty years after Spain had ceded the colony.[60] With regard to the press, the Spanish tradition in Trinidad, the French tradition in St. Lucia, and the Dutch tradition in Demerara-Essequibo and Berbice were hostile. These traditions gave Crown colony Governors a certain amount of legal leverage over newspapers: laws and traditions could always be cited in order to justify measures which in a Legislative colony would have appeared repressive. When compared to the hamstrung position of the Governors in the Legislative colonies - who had no choice but to accept free and independent newspapers and the problems that these entailed - the position of a Crown colony Governor appears advantageous. However, this power over the press in itself created a difficult problem which was part of the anglicization process; namely, dealing with the tension which arose from the introduction of British journalistic practices into colonies constitutionally antagonistic to them.

The situation was further complicated by the fact that the constitutional framework which the British had inherited was often imperfectly understood. In Trinidad a Commission of Inspectors investigating the legal situation confessed to

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[60]Brereton, History of Modern Trinidad, p.73.

being baffled at laws which were often 'vexatious and oppressive.'[61] The situation regarding the Trinidadian press was only fully clarified with the introduction of legislation in 1834, after several incidents when indecision had been shown over using the Spanish law of censorship. By late 1833 Governor Hill wanted to align the conditions of publication for the Trinidadian press as far as possible with British rather than Spanish principles:

> It is true that under the Spanish Law in force in this colony the powerful instrument of censorship exists... but I felt unwilling at this period of advanced knowledge and just anxiety for improvement to recur to it. I therefore preferred the adoption of an ordinance constructed as much as local circumstances permitted on British instead of Spanish principle.[62]

This would then remove any possible grievances that a proprietor or editor might have against the implementation of repressive Spanish Laws against English newspapers. The result of the deliberations of Hill and his Legislative Council was a fairly draconian Ordinance, which was a modified version of two British Statutes; 38 Geo. III. c. 78, and 60. Geo. III. c. 9.[63]

In Demerara the degree of confusion was such that nobody knew what the precise legal status of the press actually was. There was a belief that the executive had the right to control the press but there was still a great deal of confusion surrounding

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[61]*Report of H. M. Commissioners of Legal Enquiry on The Colony of Trinidad.* P.P. 1826-1827 (551) XXIII, p.32.

[62]C.O.295/101, Hill to Stanley, 8 January 1834, no. 3.

[63]C.O.323/50, Report by James Stephen to Stanley, 24 February 1834.

the issue.[64] This reached its apogee in 1834 during Alexander Stevenson's trial for libel. Much of the proceedings in Court were taken up with minutely detailed legal discussions about which laws were actually in force in the colony.[65] No consensus emerged, and the ill-defined legal status of the Demeraran press continued until 1839 when legislation based on British precedent was introduced to clarify the situation.[66] There is no indication that this law was introduced for politically repressive reasons in response to a particular situation. It was presented as a way of overcoming possible problems in the legal system. The Governor noted:

> ... it provides against a numerous proprietorship by requiring the names of all, this is rendered necessary in a small society, where the assessors and witnesses in cases of libel, if not known, might be named or called on, in decisions where they themselves might be concerned.[67]

As in Trinidad, this Ordinance removed any possible grievances about repressive Dutch laws being used against English newspapers.[68]

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[64]C.O.111/44, petition of eight 'Gentlemen,' 28 April 1824, requesting that Sir Benjamin D'Urban exercise his authority over the press 'which it is understood belongs to him by the laws and usages of the colony...', enclosed with D'Urban to Bathurst, 7 June 1824, private. See also C.O.111/55, Report by First Fiscal on Alexander Stevenson's petition, 21 August 1826, and the statement of F.P. Van Berckel, 22 July 1826, both enclosed with no. 35. Van Berckel had been a resident in the colony since at least 1799.

[65]See the reports in The Guiana Chronicle, 10, 13, 15 October 1834, filed with C.O.111/133, no. 54.

[66]C.O.111/166, Henry Light (Governor of British Guiana, 1838 to 1848), to Lord John Russell, 2 December 1839, no. 191, Ordinance no. 4, 23 November 1839.

[67]Ibid.

[68]Interestingly, similar laws were passed in several of the Leeward Islands much later. Dominica, 1848; St. Kitts, 1877; Antigua, 1883. See Dudley Semper and Alan Burns, Index of The Laws of The Federated Colony of The Leeward Islands And of The Several Presidencies Comprising The Same, London 1911.

With an imprecise understanding of the powers that the executive possessed regarding the press, the vagaries in policy which occurred in the Crown colonies can to some extent be traced to individual personality traits. The general sense of confusion over foreign traditions of Government released personal ideas about how to cope with the press as the Governors attempted to compensate for constitutional uncertainties. This had the practical effect of either freeing the press completely or shackling it. These contrasting results are shown by comparing the attitudes of three successive Lt. Governors of Demerara: Sir John Murray (1813-1823); Sir Benjamin D'Urban (1824-1833); and Sir James Carmichael-Smyth (1833-1838).[69] Murray governed the colony during two critical periods: the removal from office of William Rough, the President of the Judiciary, and the 1823 slave revolt. The press was deeply involved in both of these events.

The Guiana Chronicle was central in the campaign to remove Rough from office. The crisis which grew from this incident was grave. It completely paralysed the Demeraran judicial system and caused the temporary collapse of the administration of justice. Sir Benjamin D'Urban later blamed The Chronicle for having produced 'all the dissention, violence and general disorder, which tore the colony to pieces...' [70] Despite the evidence that the press was helping to destabilise the colony Sir John Murray did virtually nothing to prevent or limit its publication. His attitude contrasts with William Rough's view. Throughout the crisis Rough never lost a sense of anger that The Chronicle was allowed to continue its attacks on him with apparent impunity.

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[69]In 1826, D'Urban was also made Lt. Governor of Berbice. In 1831, he became the first Governor of British Guiana.

[70]C.O.111/55, D'Urban to Bathurst, 7 September 1826, private.

In early January 1821, six months into the affair, Rough wrote to Murray after yet another hostile piece had appeared in The Chronicle:

> Can your Excellency deem it just that I should continue subject to such malignant perversion of the truth - or ought I really to be left unprotected against such gross ex-parte statements, as there are made? I have borne much for months past: I cannot avoid however now saying to your Excellency that if the licence prevailing be much longer allowed it will be utterly out of my power, with common decency, to execute the duties of my function.[71]

Rough's demands for executive protection from the press continued after his suspension from office on 6 October 1821. The following day Rough wrote to Murray asking that the press be now prevented from attacking him. The Governor replied that Rough was entitled to the full protection of the colony's laws should he wish to seek it.[72] Murray, who during this affair had also been criticised by correspondents with The Chronicle, claimed throughout that Rough himself was to blame for these attacks. The Court President's effective suspension of the administration of justice had obstructed a prosecution for libel instigated against Stevenson by the First Fiscal on 15 August 1820. By reopening the Courts, Rough could then allow the prosecution to proceed. Murray denied having any legal power over the press, and openly blamed Rough for the entire situation:

> ... so far from having encouraged those attacks I did everything to repress them short of the exercise of arbitrary power which would only have drawn odium

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[71]C.O.111/35, Rough to Murray, 6 January 1821, p.110.

[72]C.O.111/34, Rough to Murray, 7 October 1821, and Murray to Rough, 8 October 1821, enclosures with no. 206.

> on my administration without in the smallest degree diminishing the evil with respect to the President whose official conduct had created a dissatisfaction throughout the colony as deeply impressed as it was general.[73]

Murray showed a similar disinclination to become involved with the Demeraran press before and after the 1823 slave revolt. He maintained this stance despite the fact he had been authorised by the Colonial Office to censor the press a full three months before the revolt.[74] The British Government had hoped that these instructions would prevent news of proposed ameliorative measures filtering down into the slave population through the medium of a hostile colonial press. However, these hopes were not fulfilled, and the results were disastrous results for the colony. On his return to London in 1824 Murray was asked to explain his failure to put these instructions into effect. Murray answered by saying that although he censored the official Government Gazette (he claimed this was an onerous task in itself), he did not feel he was empowered by Dutch law to control the privately-owned press in this way. Murray explained that he had summoned the colony's private editors and informed them that if in future, articles likely to excite controversy appeared in their papers, they would be required to submit the proof-sheets of their papers for official scrutiny. The editors replied by saying that if this was resorted to it would be challenged in the Courts as unconstitutional. Murray (who privately agreed with them), accepted this and ignoring the sanction he had from the Secretary of State, merely attempted to persuade the editors about what was suitable for publication. He eventually even gave up with this amid the chaos of the revolt and its aftermath:

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[73]C.O.111/34, Murray to Bathurst, 24 May 1821, no. 191.

[74]C.O.112/5, Bathurst to Murray, 28 May 1823, private and confidential.

> ... the irritation consequent on the rebellion and the ferment excited by the constant recurrence of violent publications in the English papers... at length put an end to temper on the part of the Colonial Editors and completely annihilated the influence my arguments had till then enabled me to maintain with them.[75]

Murray refused to accept any responsibility towards the press and left the governance of newspaper conduct to the operation of the law. Whether this was out of genuine ignorance of Dutch law, an intrinsic sympathy for the freedom of the press, or fear of the political consequences from invoking repressive measures is unclear. The results, however, were clear. During Murray's Governorship the Demeraran press enjoyed a status and degree of freedom comparable to newspapers in the Legislative colonies.

The contrast between Murray and Sir Benjamin D'Urban was stark. Why the two men had such dramatically differing views on their powers over the press is unclear. D'Urban was convinced as soon as he arrived in the colony that he had the constitutional right to control the press. He initially expressed amazement that Murray had allowed this right to lapse,[76] but D'Urban later modified his opinion when he admitted he could find no specific Dutch Law which covered the executive-press relationship. D'Urban felt this did not matter - the security of the colony demanded press restraint, and significantly, an important part of local opinion expected it.[77] Despite the fact that D'Urban used the powers of the executive to their fullest extent, it should be emphasised that he suppressed The Colonist and The Guiana Chronicle

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[75]C.O.111/44, Murray to Wilmot-Horton, 10 July 1824.

[76]Ibid. D'Urban to Bathurst, 6 May 1824, private.

[77]Ibid. D'Urban to Bathurst, 7 June 1824, private.

with reluctance. This was shown by the repeated warnings he gave to William Towart and Alexander Stevenson about the contents of their papers - warnings which D'Urban claimed they ignored. D'Urban was aware that his measures would result in accusations of executive tyranny, and it is perhaps for this reason that he sent such detailed despatches to the Colonial Office, keeping the Secretary of State fully informed of his reasons for pursuing the course he did.

However, D'Urban did appear to exhibit something of an intrinsic hostility to the ideal of a free press, a view which was undoubtedly reinforced by the particular dangers newspapers posed in a slave colony. This view contrasted with that of Sir James Carmichael-Smyth. Smyth was fully aware of the negative aspects of the colonial press. In 1832, during a troubled period over free coloured rights, Smyth had been involved in a libel case in the Bahamas with the editor of The Bahama Argus.[78] Smyth blamed the 1832 Jamaican revolt on the colony's press, and was also aware of the provocative record of The Guiana Chronicle.[79] Despite his experiences in the Bahamas, his views on the Jamaican revolt, and his knowledge of The Guiana Chronicle, Smyth lifted D'Urban's ban on The Chronicle and granted Stevenson a license to recommence publishing the paper. Smyth even expressed the view that newspapers could play a positive political role, a sentiment that his predecessor certainly did not share:

> ... a free, candid, and liberal discussion of all subjects can never do otherwise than good, provided only such discussions are conducted free of all violence

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[78]The Barbadian, 17 March 1832.

[79]C.O.111/127, memo for the Government Secretary, 18 July 1833, enclosed with no. 17; C.O.111/131, memo for the Government Secretary, 20 July 1833, enclosed with no. 105.

> and intemperate language. - I should be the last person to interfere with the liberty of the press or with the conduct of any Editor provided he keeps within those rational and decorous bounds I have described.[80]

The contrasts between D'Urban and Smyth bear some similarity to those between Sir Patrick Ross and Sir Evan MacGregor. However, differences of attitude appear much sharper and clearer in the Crown colonies because personal attitudes had to compensate for the legal confusion. In the Legislative colonies personal attitudes to the press were constrained by legal structures which allowed for the freedom of the press. The personal attitudes of Ross and MacGregor only became apparent because they passed judgement on the actions of other people. In Governor Smyth's case, he felt that if The Chronicle went beyond the bounds of respectability in political discussions it should have been economically punished rather than repressed using formal powers:

> The extinction of The Guiana Chronicle is easily to be effected by the same means which were employed to promote its circulation. A paper cannot flourish without subscribers nor can its slander be disseminated without readers - the same influence which raised The Guiana Chronicle can put it down.[81]

In contrast D'Urban chose to confront the Demeraran press with the full weight of his executive authority. The resulting tension lasted throughout his Governorship and periodically broke out into intense disputes over the freedom of the press in the colony.

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[80]Ibid.

[81]C.O.111/146, Carmichael-Smyth's minute to the Guianan Court of Policy, 13 August 1836, enclosed with no. 198.

Different personal interpretations of the position of the press also occurred in St. Lucia. The St. Lucia Public Gazette first appeared on 31 January 1831, and it seems that during Governor George Mackie's short administration of the Government (10 January to 8 March 1831), The Gazette was subject to tight controls.[82] Mackie was succeeded by Colonel Mark Bozon who appears to have let these controls on the paper slip. By July 1831 The Gazette was causing great controversy in the colony with attacks on the prevalence of vice and immoral habits among white St. Lucians. The paper was further able to exploit its freedom under Bozon's replacement, Colonel John Mallet. Mallet was reluctant to implement repressive measures against The St. Lucia Gazette, although he did warn the editor about material he thought was unsuitable for publication. During the six month period, July to December 1831, there appears to have been a high degree of executive uncertainty in the colony regarding the press. British libel laws were not in force, and there appeared no inclination on Mallet's part to censor the paper as he was allowed by French law.[83] This vague situation was probably the result of two things. Firstly, the fact that the paper was under the control of a Government officer made Mallet very cautious in dealing with it. Secondly, it was the first 'English' newspaper in what was still essentially a French colony, so there were no precedents about how to cope with it. French newspapers had been printed in the colony since it had come under British control but these had contained no political material. The colony's first politically independent newspaper produced

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[82]C.O.253/30, Petition of St. Lucian colonists, 21 August 1831, enclosed with no. 25.

[83]C.O.253/30, Sir John Mallet (Governor of St. Lucia, 1831), to George Busteed, 31 September 1831, enclosed with no. 25.

a sense of executive indecision that was only relieved by the intervention of the Colonial Office which ordered its immediate closure.

In Demerara several factors combined to heighten the basic risks and contradictions which were inherent in the publication of newspapers in a slave territory. There was the 1823 revolt and its impact; foreign modes of governance; the presence of two highly political newspapers; and the Governorship of Sir Benjamin D'Urban. This combination of chronic social instability, alien traditions of Government, press provocation, and a strong executive ensured that the struggle for the freedom of the Demeraran press was unique in its intensity. Other colonies saw similar episodes occur, but none matched the bitterness with which the struggle was fought in Demerara. The struggles which emerged between the press and the executive were of two distinct types, both of which were inextricably linked to the colony's security and social stability. Firstly, there was conflict which resulted from the perceived disruptive impact of the press on the slaves. Secondly, there were the struggles which resulted from the press's disruptive impact on the colonial militia. These threats to colonial security and stability forced the tension between the executive and press into open confrontations.

The main purpose of colonial Government - the preservation of order - had been shattered in Demerara in August 1823 by the slave revolt. This devastating event had a profound impact on Sir Benjamin D'Urban, who on his arrival in the colony had to cope with its aftermath. D'Urban's belief that everything, including the freedom of the press, had to be subjugated to the overriding priority of maintaining the colony's stability seems to have been a reaction to the revolt:

> ... with every possible regard for a due and proper liberty of the press, the Lieutenant Governor's paramount duty is to watch over the safety of the Country confided to his care, and he will assuredly not suffer it to be risked, by a continuance of such agitating and inflammatory publications, as some of those that he has observed in the Colonial newspapers, during the few days which have elapsed since his arrival.[84]

To prevent a recurrence of August 1823 D'Urban altered the principle that the authorities generally applied to the press in Britain; punishment instead of prevention, subsequent censure instead of prior censorship. Under D'Urban's Governorship the Demeraran press faced the two elements combined. Suppression was both a punishment for transgression of press responsibility and it also prevented future problems.

The first newspaper to come into conflict with D'Urban was The Colonist, which was owned, printed and edited by William Towart. Towart, Alexander Stevenson, and William Baker (editor of The Royal Gazette), had been called to a meeting at which it was made clear that articles which Governor D'Urban thought were dangerous would not be tolerated in future. Towart apparently disregarded these instructions. On 23 July 1824, the Demeraran First Fiscal acting on D'Urban's orders explained for the last time that the publication of articles '... which could tend to agitate or disturb the minds of the slaves' would result in the immediate suppression of The Colonist.[85] Despite this clear warning, the edition of The Colonist which

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[84]C.O.111/44, memo for Demeraran editors, 1 May 1824, enclosed with D'Urban to Bathurst, 6 May 1824, private.

[85]C.O.111/45, D'Urban to Bathurst, 15 September 1824, private.

appeared on 27 August was described by D'Urban as being half full of 'articles of the most dangerous tendency.'[86] This issue coincided with rumours (apparently groundless), of an insurrection in the same district which had been convulsed the year before. In consequence The Colonist was suppressed and Towart left Demerara on 20 October to re-establish the paper in Barbados.

After the suppression of The Colonist, D'Urban found that the newspaper licensing system which operated in the colony had been allowed to lapse. He therefore issued new licenses to The Royal Gazette and The Guiana Chronicle. These licenses had four conditions. Newspapers were forbidden to print anything:

1. Contra bonos mores.

2. Contrary to the spirit and provisions of the enactment of their High Mightinesses the States General of Holland, of 6th August 1776.

3. Dangerous to the public welfare, or

4. detrimental to the peace and harmony of the community.[87]

These terms were extremely vague, which raised the possibility that different people would interpret them in varying ways. D'Urban's suppression of The Colonist was based on his concern that the paper's contents were reaching the slave population. A similar concern was also evident in Trinidad in 1825. Although Sir Ralph Woodford did not articulate these worries, the permission he received from the Secretary of State to censor The Trinidad Gazette was dependent upon a distinct proviso:

> ... if any articles should appear in the Colonial Gazette which in your opinion are calculated to excite commotion among the slaves by bringing the measures

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[86]Ibid.

[87]Ibid. Enclosure.

of His Majesty's Government into disrepute or by inducing the slave population to suppose that impediments will be offered to their execution...[88]

In March 1831, Governor D'Urban thought it necessary to suppress The Guiana Chronicle 'for the protection of the peace and good order of the colony.'[89] D'Urban had already suppressed The Chronicle once before, in November 1825, but he had been overruled by the Colonial Office. Since then D'Urban's room for manoeuvre against the paper had been constricted. New terms had been issued by the Colonial Office, defining Stevenson's printing license:

1. Abstinence from all comments on the slave question, except such as are calculated to promote the measures recommended by His Majesty's Government and sanctioned by Parliament.

2. Abstinence from all abuse of the local authorities.

3. Abstinence from all violent and angry expressions on any subject (whether original or extracted from other papers), which are manifestly calculated to create irritation and to encourage acts of violence in the colony.[90]

This unavoidably placed the executive-press relationship on a different plane. Stevenson could now operate more freely because the Secretary of State had loosened the executive's hold on the press. D'Urban pointed this out in a secret communication to the Colonial Office in 1827:

The occurrences accompanying the Editor's resumption of that paper, have, unfortunately, so weakened my hands, that... I am left almost powerless:-

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[88]C.O.296/6, Bathurst to Woodford, 24 September 1824, no. 23.

[89]C.O.111/72, D'Urban to Goderich, 25 March 1831, no. 11.

[90]C.O.112/6, Bathurst to D'Urban, 6 June 1826, no. 53.

because, as the terms of His licence are expressly proscribed by the highest authority of your Lordship's commands, it may, perhaps, well be doubted, whether he is amenable to me for anything but a breach of one or other of these terms.[91]

The Guiana Chronicle had resumed publication in September 1826, and periodically defied D'Urban's authority for the next five years. This cumulative defiance reached what D'Urban thought was an unacceptable peak on 14 March 1831, when The Chronicle published an editorial concerning the regulation of the colony's expenditure. The paper was suppressed a few days later, and D'Urban wrote to Goderich asking that this time the decision should not be overruled:

> ... I earnestly entreat of your Lordship, for the sake of the future welfare of the colony, that this example may not be weakened by a renewal of this printer's licence at home, if he should make application to that effect.[92]

The response from the Colonial Office was again to overrule D'Urban's decision, by ordering him to grant Stevenson permission to recommence publishing The Chronicle.[93] In turn D'Urban wrote back to the Colonial Office explaining why events subsequent to the suppression had made this impossible.[94] After The Chronicle had been suppressed Stevenson brought an action in the Courts against the First Fiscal which came before the Bench on 17 June. This action failed, and Stevenson then seemed determined to engage D'Urban in a kind of brinkmanship by publishing an

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[91]C.O.111/60, D'Urban to Bathurst, 27 March 1827, private and confidential.

[92]C.O.111/72, D'Urban to Goderich, 25 March 1831, no. 11.

[93]C.O.112/15, Goderich to D'Urban, 30 May 1831, no. 19.

[94]C.O.111/116, D'Urban to Goderich, 15 August 1831, no. 10.

unlicensed edition of his paper on 24 June. This resulted in an interdict three days later, forbidding Stevenson to print the paper for an indefinite future period.[95] This interdict was upheld by the Guianan Supreme Court on 3 March 1832 and remained in place until D'Urban left the colony in April 1833.[96] In a despatch detailing some of these events D'Urban wrote, as additional justification of his decision to suppress the paper in March 1831, of the ripple effect he believed the publication of controversial material invariably had in the colony:

> ... if a Colonial newspaper here, addresses itself to the passions, and creates the angry and seditious feelings, of the free inhabitants, the negro population never fails ultimately to be agitated as a consequence;- and I can have no doubt... that this was a great combining cause, and this very paper, - a principal agent in it, - of the revolt of 1823.[97]

On these grounds, and with the backing of the Guianan Supreme Court, D'Urban refused to allow the paper to resume publication, and it remained suppressed until he left the colony.

The issue of preventing information reaching the slaves and, in the following case, the apprentices, was a recurring theme in executive-press relations in Guiana. It reappeared in October 1834 when Sir James Carmichael-Smyth prosecuted Alexander Stevenson for libel. At this time the stability of the colony had deteriorated sharply and it was already in a state of some disarray before the trial. Despite the abusive

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[95]Ibid.

[96]C.O.111/127, Stevenson's petition to Acting Governor Smith, 30 May 1833, enclosed with no. 8.

[97]C.O.111/116, D'Urban to Goderich, 15 August 1831, no. 10.

criticism he had received from the paper, Smyth denied that the prosecution of Stevenson was personally motivated. He claimed his:

> ... sole object was to compel the Editor to be more cautious and circumspect in his conduct and to abstain from inflaming the passions and the feelings of this community at a moment at which, of all others, the most perfect calmness and forbearance ought to have been inculcated.[98]

The political priority of maintaining security had forced Smyth to prosecute Stevenson, and events following the trial confirm the Governor's claim. After Stevenson's acquittal The Chronicle's political outspokenness went completely unchecked. Two years later, after some particularly hostile articles appeared in the paper about Smyth, moves were made by members of the Court of Policy to remove Stevenson's printing license, but the Governor declined to sanction them.[99]

The question of maintaining colonial security did not just mean preventing information reaching the slaves. There was also the disruptive impact of the press on white society, which then had a ripple effect on wider colonial society in the way that D'Urban had described. Both the Demeraran and Trinidadian press had an unsettling effect on the colonial militia. The militia was a vital part of the colonial security forces. Its structure varied somewhat from colony to colony, but in general all able-bodied men between fifteen and fifty-five had to serve. The colonists took militia duties seriously and officers' commissions were valued as a means of personal aggrandizement. On two occasions the press became involved in internal disputes in the militia which prompted the intervention of the Governor concerned. The first

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[98]C.O.111/146, minute to the Guianan Court of Policy, 13 August 1836, enclosed with no. 198.

[99]Ibid.

occurred in Demerara in late 1825.[100] The Guiana Chronicle had apparently been subdued by Sir Benjamin D'Urban's original clampdown on the press in May 1824, but around September 1825 the proprietor appointed a new editor - Matthew Barker, who had been recruited in Britain. Under Barker's editorship The Guiana Chronicle started to flout the terms of its printing license. This was noted at Government House, but apart from verbal warnings to the editor the paper's infringements were overlooked. These infringements increased while D'Urban was absent in Berbice on official business. He returned to Georgetown in October 1825, and the First Fiscal drew his attention to articles in The Chronicle of 21 and 28 September. D'Urban decided that these had violated the third condition of the printing license, but he claimed that he wanted to avoid suppressing the paper:

> It is the Lieutenant Governor's imperative duty to preserve the safety of the Colony from the dangers of such inflammatory publications, which serve to excite the passions of the slaves, and renew feelings among them that would otherwise subside and be forgotten, and this duty he must perform; but he is disposed to make one more effort to do so, without depriving the publisher of his licence and permission, to print and publish.[101]

To achieve his aim D'Urban demanded to see the proof-sheets of each edition of The Chronicle in order to censor material which he thought was unsuitable for publication. The Chronicle had thus been placed in the same position as The Royal Gazette, which as the Government's official newspaper had been subject to such scrutiny since

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[100]The relevant documents for this incident can be found in C.O.111/50, D'Urban to Bathurst, 28 November 1825, private.

[101]Ibid. Memo for Alexander Stevenson, 12 October 1825.

before D'Urban's arrival. Alexander Stevenson and Matthew Barker then attempted to evade this restriction. Firstly, they sent the proof-sheets to Government House late on the day of publication, and then they printed copies of The Chronicle from uncorrected proof-sheets. In this way The Chronicle published an anonymous letter (which D'Urban had actually censored), on 15 November which attacked the commanding officer of the first battalion of the Demerara militia. The officer wrote to his superior, asking him to bring the letter to the Governor's notice. The officer did so immediately, pointing out to D'Urban the damage that would be caused to the standing of the militia if public attacks on its officers were tolerated. D'Urban agreed - the integrity of the militia could not be compromised. He felt such attacks would produce:

> ... ruinous consequences... to the discipline and good order of this valuable body, so important to the safety of the Country, if such mischievous abuse of its best officers, be any longer suffered.[102]

D'Urban felt that this, together with the challenge to his authority over the uncorrected proof-sheets, left him no other choice but to suppress the paper. The Chronicle was suppressed on 18 November 1825, the actual suppression being done by removing the handle of the printing press. This was managed with difficulty in the face of physical obstruction by Matthew Barker and some of the paper's other staff.[103] D'Urban's decision was not an immediate reaction. He simply felt that by attacking a militia officer The Guiana Chronicle had overstepped the tolerance line. In his despatch to the Colonial Office on the subject, D'Urban stated:

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[102]Ibid. Order of the Executive, 18 November 1825.

[103]Ibid. Statement of J. McGusty, 18 November 1825.

> Nothing can be more mischievous in this colony, than whatever may tend to disjoint and destroy its militia. And the attack upon Major Lyng... would, if I had not speedily interfered, have infallibly produced his resignation, and that of other valuable officers besides.[104]

D'Urban's intervention had been a preventive measure to stop problems of indiscipline spreading throughout other militia regiments. In Trinidad in 1833, the problem, although still only confined to one militia regiment, had reached a more advanced stage.[105] Young Anderson, the editor of The Colonial Observer was a senior militia captain in the Royal Trinidad Artillery with fourteen years service. One of the key themes of his editorship of both The Royal Gazette and The Colonial Observer was his avowed support for the free coloured population. The equivocal and ambiguous nature of this support has already been discussed in Chapter Three, but its imprecise and often contradictory nature did not matter to Anderson's fellow officers. To them, Anderson was trying to drive a wedge between white officers and the free coloureds under their command. The fact that a racial gap already existed was never mentioned, and there is a sense that white racial fears under-pinned this whole affair. Anderson was seen as stimulating free coloured political aspirations to improve their status, and these threatened white supremacy. Whites reacted by placating free coloureds with praise, whilst at the same time conveying a sense of fear at any genuine advance. This appears in the correspondence of the people involved in this incident, and also in the pages of The Port of Spain Gazette.

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[104]Ibid. D'Urban to Bathurst, 28 November 1825, private.

[105]This episode was dealt with by Fraser, History of Trinidad, Vol. II, 323-324, 328-330; and Carmichael, History of Trinidad And Tobago, pp.179-182.

Of particular dissatisfaction to the militia officers was the way Anderson reported a theft of documents from the Vice Admiralty Court in November 1832. This incident was connected with the obstructions thrown in the way of the Government's prosecution of slave owners who had illegally imported slaves into Trinidad.[106] The Colonial Observer commented on this on 17 November, and other issues of the paper which proved controversial included those of 13 October, 15 and 31 December 1832, 5 and 26 January 1833.[107] None of these issues have survived, apart from that of 5 January. Whilst Anderson was editing this edition he was visited by a delegation from the colony's Council, who demanded the name of the author of an article which had appeared in a previous number. The officers of the Artillery felt that Anderson's motives, which they deemed to be mercenary, compounded these editorial offenses:

> ... Captain Anderson declared to several individuals of respectability, that he deprecated the sentiments expressed in them [his papers], as much as anyone could do, and that if a situation could be procured for him, which would give him support, he would withdraw from the editorship of The Observer, and write ten times more against the doctrines he had been advocating, than he had ever done in their favour.[108]

This criticism supports my view of Anderson as an opportunist who saw the propogation of abolitionist views as a means of achieving personal advance.

The political contents of The Observer, deemed unacceptable by many, resulted in Anderson being socially ostracised, and the gulf between the two sides became

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[106]For details of this incident see C.O.295/94, despatch nos. 102 and 103.

[107]C.O.295/98, Officers of the Royal Trinidad Artillery to Hill, 26 April 1833, enclosed with no. 20.

[108]Ibid.

unbridgeable. On 28 January 1833, eleven Artillery officers signed a letter to their commanding officer, Robert Neilson, informing him that they would no longer parade with Anderson. On 3 February, five of them walked off the parade ground when Anderson arrived. This sparked off discontent in the Artillery, with the non-commissioned officers and privates submitting a memorial to Governor Grant, apparently in support of Anderson. For his part Grant seems to have inexplicably withdrawn from the whole affair, refusing to answer several letters that Neilson wrote to him on the subject.[109] Grant refused to implement any immediate and effective measures to bring the incident to a conclusion. The most likely explanation for this lack of action is that Grant's term of office was almost finished and he simply did not want to become involved in an affair that would inevitably raise questions about his alleged patronage of Anderson. Grant's earlier problems with the colonial press may also have influenced his decision. The timing of his attempt to solve the dispute supports this interpretation. Grant finally acted almost three months after the incident, just three days before he left the colony. He issued a general militia order on 20 April, promoting Anderson to the rank of Major and officially censuring the other officers involved in the affair. Part of this order gave further support to those in Trinidad who believed that Anderson had worked in the colony under the Governor's protection and patronage:

> ... in justice to Captain Anderson, and in opposition to the representation which has been made by the Officers leagued against him, His Excellency has to express his fullest satisfaction with Captain Anderson's conduct and character

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[109]Ibid. Neilson to Hill, 27 April 1833.

as an officer and a gentleman, and as a person anxious for the welfare of the colony and for the good of all its inhabitants.[110]

This order left the affair unfinished, and Grant's successor, Sir George Hill, was left to resolve the dispute. The extent of the conflict came as a complete surprise to Hill. He had arrived in the colony on 14 April, and between that date and 22 April when Grant left the colony, Hill had been told nothing about the dispute in the militia. The first Hill knew of the situation was on 23 April when he read Grant's militia order. On the same day, Hill was visited by Anderson who, obviously not content with Grant's militia order, demanded full redress. Hill asked that the complaint be put in writing, but Anderson never complied with the request. On 26 April, Hill received a letter from the officers involved charging Anderson with conduct subversive of militia discipline. Faced with the disarray, Hill's first inclination was to order an inquiry, but he changed his mind thinking this would only worsen the conflict. Hill issued his own general militia order on 8 May, which attempted to put a stop to the whole affair:

> The welfare of the colony and the duty of the Lieut. Governor demand that this discreditable and mischievous procedure should be arrested. It must cease.[111]

The order went on to censure both the officers for their conduct and Robert Neilson for not stopping them. Neilson's role in this affair is indicative of class tensions that were helping to shape events. Neilson was a principal white: an ex-officio member of the Legislative Council; the head of a trading firm in Port of Spain; and a Colonel in

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[110]Ibid. Governor Grant's General Militia Order, 20 April 1833.

[111]Ibid. Governor Hill's General Militia Order, 8 May 1833.

the militia. He was also a leading opponent of the November 1831 Order in Council.[112] Anderson on the other hand was a secondary white, who at this point in time appears to have been politically isolated from his own ethnic group and struggling financially. There is little doubt that Neilson had political reasons for tacitly approving of the actions of the officers. Neilson's political opposition to The Colonial Observer (he had been part of the deputation which had called on Anderson to demand the author's name of the article in The Observer), probably influenced his decision not to stop the officers, despite being informed five days in advance of their refusal to parade with Anderson. There is other evidence which confirms that this was the case. John Wilson and James Porter, who had been implicated in the theft of documents from the Vice Admiralty Court, worked for Neilson, and he may have been influenced by loyalty to them. Wilson and Porter were among the officers of the Artillery eventually sued by Anderson.

Governor Hill's militia order removed Anderson from the Artillery and offered him a staff post which he declined, claiming that Hill's 'mind had been poisoned against' him.[113] Convinced that he could never achieve justice from the executive, Anderson decided to sue the officers involved in the affair. The case was heard on 19 February 1834, and Anderson was awarded £250 in damages.[114] The key to Hill's action was his belief in the crucial importance of militia unity. His removal of Anderson from the regiment was a decision based on his view that the politics of The Observer (irrespective of whether Anderson's motives were genuine or not), were

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[112]Carmichael, History of Trinidad And Tobago, p.179.

[113]C.O.295/98, Anderson to Stanley, 21 July 1833, enclosed with Hill to Stanley, 29 August 1833, unnumbered despatch.

[114]The Port of Spain Gazette, 21 February 1834.

inherently destructive to the Corp's unity. Such unity would be impossible to rebuild if Anderson remained part of the Regiment. The prospect of abolition was also uppermost in Hill's mind; he wrote in his official despatch:

> ... the moment might not be distant when the whole of the Militia force of the Colony might be required to preserve tranquillity and that it was therefore of great importance to arrest the progress of such infectious example from reaching the other Corps.[115]

The Royal Trinidad Artillery was reorganised on 11 August, and Hill made a point of awarding several commissions to free coloureds.[116] Apart from Hill's withdrawal of the printing contract, The Colonial Observer was left untouched and Anderson continued to edit the paper in a controversial manner.

The Observer remained a source of political controversy in the colony for another six months. In a move which underlined Anderson's editorial inconsistency, he began to publish satirical attacks on the non-commissioned officers of the reorganised Artillery; the people who had formerly supported him. A group of these officers eventually threatened Anderson with physical violence if he continued to print such material.[117] Hill intervened to stop this threat being carried out, but he continued to ignore demands (that were being made by Catholics as well as the members of the militia), to enforce some kind of restraints on The Observer. Hill continued to tolerate the paper in spite of the fact that Anderson sent two memorials to the Colonial Office which accused the Governor of being controlled by a party

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[115]C.O.295/98, Hill to Stanley, 1 July 1833, no. 20.

[116]Ibid. Hill to Stanley, 1 August 1833, no. 28.

[117]C.O.295/99, Petition of N.C.O.'s and Gunners of the Royal Trinidad Artillery, undated (eighty-one signatures), enclosed with no. 61.

faction and of presiding over an inept administration.[118] Hill seems to have been finally pushed to act by two things. Firstly, the cumulative effects of the paper's contents pushed it over the tolerance line, and secondly, The Observer started to appear without the names either of the publisher or the printer.[119] This would have created legal complications had the paper ever been prosecuted for libel. Hill was aware that under Spanish law he was entitled to censor The Observer, but he chose not to do so. Instead of employing existing legislation, Hill felt that a new Ordinance was needed which was specifically framed to deal with the problems created by The Observer. The Ordinance received the King's assent and became law in Trinidad on 2 May 1834. It appears that the threat of this legislation had driven The Colonial Observer out of existence by that point.[120] With The Port of Spain Gazette drained of its political vigour by the libel suit brought by the Chief Justice and the closure of The Colonial Observer, the development of the Trinidadian press had come to a temporary halt.

The above has been concerned with the negative aspects of the relationship between the executive and the press; mutual hostility on a personal level, the need to control and censor the press that had resulted from political developments, and the punishment of those who owned and edited papers. The relationship between the executive and the press was, therefore, heavily determined by efforts to contain the

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[118]C.O.295/98, Anderson to Stanley, 21 July 1833, enclosed with unnumbered despatch, 29 August 1833; C.O.295/99, Anderson to Stanley, 25 November 1833, enclosed with unnumbered despatch, 25 November 1833.

[119]C.O. 295/101, Hill to Stanley, 8 January 1834, no. 3.

[120]The Port of Spain Gazette, 21 February 1834.

damage - potential, imagined, and real - that it was thought newspapers could cause. This basic goal was not affected by political differences between planter and liberal papers, although it was shaped by the constitutional framework of individual colonies. However, the relationship between the two parties did not necessarily have to be negative. There were numerous examples from Britain of attempts by Governments and politicians to use the press constructively, either by buying newspapers outright or bribing them for their support. In contrast, few comparable efforts were made in the West Indies, and those which were tried ended in conspicuous failure. The lack of Government endeavour in this field is probably due to the political tension of the period; this made it too dangerous to become closely involved with the press. Most Governors were suspicious of the press, but not all of them had an inveterate hostility to newspapers. However, there was a considerable gap between a general belief in the freedom and usefulness of the press and becoming actively involved with it. The well-publicised problems in colonies where newspapers professed support for the British Government, may have convinced some Governors that it was not worth the trouble of becoming involved with the press. Events in Antigua and Trinidad (and also in St. Lucia, which will be examined below), show that the end result of such press support could be counter-productive.

Unlike in Britain, where politicians such as Canning and Peel were reputed to have written for the press, there is no substantial evidence which suggests any colonial Governor actually contributed articles to newspapers.[121] Again, in the colonial context, this would probably only have produced political embarrassment and trouble. The sole indication that has been found of direct executive involvement with the press

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[121] Aspinall, Politics And The Press, p.199.

came from Berbice, but the evidence is far from conclusive and constitutes little more than rumour and hearsay. On 14 March 1827, The Guiana Chronicle published a letter from a correspondent signing himself *A Colonist of What Was Berbice.*[122] Without directly stating it, the writer made it clear that he blamed the Lt. Governor of Berbice, Henry Beard, for instigating a political change which had apparently taken place in the pages of The Berbice Gazette. During the early part of 1827 The Gazette had started to print articles which were favourable to the general direction of the British Government's West Indian policy. There is no real evidence to prove the charge that Beard was responsible for the change in the paper. He later denied that he had ever tampered with the colony's press in any way, including his right to censor it which he was aware of but chose not to use.[123] The only indication of any executive sympathy with the press is Beard's recommendation of Schultz's petition to the Secretary of State, which sought compensation for the financial losses his paper had suffered because of his support for the British Government.[124]

The outstanding examples of active Government involvement in establishing newspapers occurred in St. Lucia, Guiana, and Jamaica, and all ended in complete failure. However, it must be emphasised that none of these attempts was the work of the Governor. In St. Lucia and Jamaica subordinate Government officials, with the executive's permission, attempted to establish newspapers, while the Guianan example

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[122]The Guiana Chronicle, 14 March 1827. Fragment enclosed with C.O.111/60, D'Urban to Bathurst, 27 March 1827, private and confidential. The publication of this letter earned Alexander Stevenson one of his periodic warnings from Governor D'Urban.

[123]C.O.111/106, Henry Beard (Lt. Governor of Berbice, 1821 to 1831), to William Huskisson (Secretary of State for War and the Colonies September 1827 to May 1828), 15 January 1828, no. 6. C.O.111/114, Beard to Howick, 29 October 1831, private.

[124]C.O.111/104, Beard to Goderich, 8 August 1827, no. 63.

was the work of a private individual whose political aims also had the Governor's backing. Any official involvement with the press was loaded with potential difficulties, and in the case of St. Lucia chronic tension emerged between the Governor and the official involved. In December 1829, George Busteed arrived in St. Lucia to take up the position of Chief Secretary to the colonial Government. Little is known of Busteed. He was born around 1786, and at one time had held a position in Newfoundland from which he was removed in controversial circumstances.[125] In St. Lucia Busteed found inadequate printing facilities, and only one newspaper of very poor quality which closed six months after his arrival. Busteed took it upon himself to improve the situation and suggested establishing a printing office and an associated newspaper.[126] This move met with the support of the Governor and Council. There is no evidence of any discussion between Busteed and Governor David Stewart about the content and political direction the proposed paper was to take. Detecting any consistent attitude from Government House on this subject is difficult because between 1829 and 1834 four Governors died in office in St. Lucia. This obviously caused a degree of confusion with despatches to and from the Colonial Office.[127]

With the support of the Governor and his Council, Busteed managed to establish The St. Lucia Gazette And Public Advertiser. The paper was initially controlled from Government House, but Governor Mackie died in March 1831 after

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[125]C.O.253/37, note from a Mr Clarke, 1 February 1832, enclosed with Carter to Goderich, 4 February 1832, unnumbered despatch.

[126]C.O.253/29, Busteed to Bozon, 14 June 1831, enclosed with no. 24.

[127]Breen, St. Lucia, p.421, gives a complete list of the Governors and Acting Governors of this period. 1829 - General David Stewart; Capt. G.A.E. Delhoste*; Capt. Robert Mullen*; Maj. Francis Power.* 1830 - Col. J.A. Farquharson.* 1831 - Gen. George Mackie; Col M.A. Bozon*; Col. J.W. Mallet*; Col. M.A. Bozon.* 1832 - Col John Carter*; Gen. J.A. Farquharson.
*Acting Governor.

only three months in office. Busteed used the opportunity created by Mackie's death and the arrival of a temporary Governor to loosen the controls which had tied the paper. By July 1831, The Gazette was causing controversy among the colonists with its articles on the colony's finances, and the vice and immorality of St. Lucian society. A petition addressed to Acting Governor Bozon was drawn up, dated 31 August, but it was almost a month before it received enough signatures to submit it to the Governor. By that time, Bozon had been replaced by Colonel John Mallet, whose status as Governor - temporary or permanent - is unclear. On 27 September 1831, Mallet received the petition complaining about The St. Lucia Gazette signed by a group of about 100 colonists.[128] The crux of the petition was the incongruity of a paper as socially indiscreet as The Gazette being subsidised by the colonists themselves:

> ... your petitioners could never have believed nor supposed that money thus given at their expense would have been employed to traduce maliciously their character: and to abuse the liberty of the press.[129]

The petitioners called for the paper to be suppressed, and for a reduction of £175 to be made in the Government printer's salary. Mallet replied by assuring the petitioners that adequate steps had been taken to deal with the problem, and that it was not necessary to send the petition to the Colonial Office. However, on 1 October, in a move which eventually forced the issue to a conclusion, the colonists forwarded the petition to the Colonial Office by private post.

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[128]The following account, including all quotations has been pieced together from documents in C.O.253/53, Mallet to Goderich, 26 November 1831, no. 25.

[129]Ibid. Petition of St. Lucian colonists, 31 August 1831.

Mallet first attempted to deal with the problem by privately speaking to Busteed on 27 September, expressing his disquiet about the tenor of the paper. In a written reply to this conversation, Busteed advised Mallet to adopt one of three courses. The Gazette could be left completely free from executive interference, and the libel laws would then operate as a check on contentious material. The paper could be suppressed outright, or the proof-sheets could be submitted for official scrutiny prior to publication. This section of the paper could then be headlined **OFFICIAL**. All of Busteed's suggestions were based on practices which were used against the colonial press in this period. Mallet rejected Busteed's ideas as misplaced, and merely instructed that:

> ... nothing whatever personal or calculated to hurt the feelings of individuals or the community at large may appear in any part of the Government Gazette.[130]

These instructions did not, however, deal with the root cause of the problem, which Mallet thought stemmed from the peculiar form of ownership of the paper. The Governor was clearly unhappy with the way in which The St. Lucia Gazette was run:

> ... I must confess that I see many objections to the paper being carried on as it is by one of the highest public officers in the Colony.[131]

To Mallet, this form of ownership compromised Busteed's ability to act independently, especially as he might be called on to support the Governor if the press had to be censored. However, rather than order Busteed to sever all connections with the paper, Mallet simply ordered that his name was never to appear in print. Despite these

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[130]Ibid. Mallet to Busteed, 31 September 1831.

[131]Ibid.

reservations, Mallet, like Sir James Carmichael-Smyth, was not opposed to the ideal of a free press. If properly edited, Mallet thought an official newspaper could be a useful asset to the colony:

> ... I consider that if properly managed it might tend to greatly assist the Government, and be made a valuable channel of conciliatory communication with the inhabitants of the island.[132]

Mallet seems to have genuinely felt that a colonial newspaper was open to editorial self-restraint. He specifically denied that he wanted to put 'shackles' on The Gazette, but he insisted that an official paper was not the proper channel for discussions of a kind contained in the articles which had caused the petition. In some ways Mallet was dealing with the same problem that Sir Lewis Grant was shortly to face in Trinidad; limiting the political damage caused by a Government Gazette which had escaped the control of Government House and in effect become a private newspaper. In this case Mallet's difficulties were compounded by the fact that Busteed was a Government official; the Governor was obviously unsure about how to deal with this delicate situation without offending his subordinate. If Mallet was indeed only an interim Governor of St. Lucia, the impermanence of his position might have created reluctance to use stronger tactics against The St. Lucia Gazette. Reluctance on the part of caretaker Governors to become too deeply involved in colonial affairs certainly occurred elsewhere. Following Sir Benjamin D'Urban's departure from Guiana in April 1833 there were two brief caretaker administrations. The temporary nature of

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[132]Ibid. Mallet to Busteed, 15 November 1831.

both stopped the Governors granting printing licenses to Alexander Stevenson and a man called Henry Heathorn because it was felt inappropriate to do so.[133]

The key to explaining the situation in St. Lucia from Busteed's point of view probably lies in a letter he wrote to Mallet on 14 November 1831. In this letter Busteed denied that he had any connection with The St. Lucia Gazette and launched a critical attack on Mallet's administration. This letter culminated in the claim that 'neither the instructions, nor the intentions, nor the wishes of His Majesty's Government are now acted upon.'[134] The precise reasons for this sudden attack are unclear, but it may well have been the case that Busteed had deliberately engineered the entire confrontation. It was clear that Mallet would have to send documents concerning this incident back to the Colonial Office to vindicate his own conduct, and it is plausible that Busteed hoped for personal gain from any reprimand Mallet might then receive from the Colonial Office. In support of this interpretation two occasions can be cited when Busteed had offered his services as Governor of the colony, and he even offered his services as permanent private Secretary to Lord Goderich for £500 per annum.[135] From various other incidents he was involved in, it is clear that Busteed was seeking opportunities for personal advancement. In this respect his editorship of The St. Lucia Gazette was of a similar stamp to Young Anderson at The Colonial Observer. Both men claimed that they supported the British Government, and both were clearly looking for some kind of reward for that support. The results of their

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[133]C.O.111/127, Acting Governor Smith to Stanley, 1 June 1833, no. 8.

[134]C.O.253/30, Busteed to Mallet, 14 November 1831, enclosed with no. 25.

[135]C.O.253/30, Busteed to Goderich, 26 October 1831, enclosed with no. 19. Busteed's letter mentions an earlier claim to the Governorship of St. Lucia made in March 1831, which went unanswered.

actions caused disruption in Trinidad and St. Lucia, and both men suffered materially. In Busteed's case the strategy completely backfired. His involvement with the press resulted in his dismissal from office, the closure of The St. Lucia Gazette and further delays in the development of the colony's press.[136] Despite continued attempts to reverse the decision, Busteed never regained office; such was his dogged persistence in this respect, that the Under Secretary of State seems to have felt Busteed had lost his mind.[137]

After abolition at least two attempts were made to establish newspapers that were aimed at the apprentices. The first occurred in Guiana in 1835. Governor Smyth had no hesitation in supporting the petition of Henry Wells, who requested £200 sterling per annum from the Guianan coffers to support his proposed paper, The Rising Sun.[138] This paper, planned primarily as a religious journal, was aimed at the education of the apprentices. Despite Smyth's endorsement of the plan, the Colonial Office refused to support it on the grounds that it was politically unwise for the British Government openly to support any newspaper.[139] As a result The Rising Sun does not appear to have ever been published. A similar lack of Government support forced the closure of The West Indian in Jamaica. Sir Lionel Smith was appointed Governor of the colony in 1836, two years into the apprenticeship system.[140] Smith

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[136]C.O.254/9, Goderich to Acting Governor of St. Lucia, 12 December 1831, no. 67; 1 February 1832, no. 77. See also Breen, St. Lucia, pp.266-267.

[137]See the numerous letters from Howick to members of the Busteed family in C.O.254/8. For the allusion to George Busteed's state of mind see Howick to Stewart [it is unknown who this man was], 14 January 1833.

[138]C.O.111/138, Carmichael-Smyth to Glenelg, 29 June 1835, no. 18.

[139]C.O.112/19, Glenelg to Carmichael-Smyth, 14 August 1835, no. 28.

[140]The following account is taken from Cave, 'To Instruct And Enlighten The Negro.'

was strongly committed to emancipation and came to believe that a newspaper for the apprentices would be useful. It would also remove the incongruity of supplying planter papers with Government financial assistance. On 20 November 1837, Captain Edward Baynes, a Special Magistrate, submitted a report to Smith on the possibilities of opening a paper which would require minimum financing from the Government. Smith was enthusiastic and a prospectus was published on 28 November, with the Governor subscribing £50. Baynes planned to publish the first issue on 10 January, and he assumed that guaranteed Government assistance would compensate for a lack of subscribers. Smith waited until 26 December before informing the Colonial Office about the situation and he urged a positive response. However, it was felt unwise to sanction the paper. The first number of The West Indian was published on 13 January 1838, but it only lasted about nine months. Its closure was a result of Baynes's lack of financial planning and of obstruction from the Jamaican Deputy Postmaster over transportation costs. Despite a second appeal from Smith to the Colonial Office on behalf of the paper, The West Indian collapsed. Both The Rising Sun and The West Indian had run into the unavoidable problem that faced newspapers which did not conform to planter orthodoxies - the withdrawal of subscribers. The only way around this was to receive outside financial help. The refusal of the British Government to supply this meant that the failure of these newspapers was assured.

As has been shown, the relationships between West Indian Governors and the press varied in this period; demographics, recent colonial history, the varying political allegiance of newspapers, different constitutional structures, and individual personality traits all made important contributions to shaping the variations between those relationships. However, slavery is the most important element that links a series of

seemingly disparate events. The dangers of newspapers printing political material that was specifically relevant to a slave colony within that colony itself were always present, even in times of apparent calm. Several Governors of the period were clearly aware of this fact, which goes some way to explaining why they were reluctant to use the press in the traditional fashion to put forward official views; there was virtually no active engagement with the press in this positive sense. The impression that Governors may have felt uneasy about interfering with the press in such politically sensitive circumstances is reinforced, at least in the Legislative colonies, by the lack of concerted effort to control the politicisation of newspapers. However, there is probably a simpler explanation. It seems likely that some Governors would have liked to impose restrictions on the press but they were unable to do so. They governed under constitutional restraints and thus were unable to counter politically outspoken newspapers in a truly effective manner; an attempt directly to interfere with the press would almost certainly have produced some form of popular protest. The Governors of the Crown colonies, ostensibly better prepared to deal with troublesome newspapers, arguably fared worse. The freedom of the press was a powerful ideal in the minds of British colonists, especially when it seemed compromised by foreign modes of governance; inevitably, attempts to utilise repressive governmental traditions proved problematic. If political newspapers in slave colonies were dangerous incongruities in periods of stability, the publication of inflammatory political articles at the height of the abolition crisis starkly demonstrated that the political priorities of newspaper proprietors and colonial Governors were irreconcilable. The former seemed determined, no matter what the consequences, to reflect and contribute to a highly unstable political situation; the latter were entrusted with guiding the colonies through the crisis.

A gulf of perspective of this magnitude and in these circumstances ensured that the relationship between the press and the executive was never going to be easy, and in several colonies it deteriorated markedly in the 1820's and early 1830's.

CHAPTER SEVEN: THE VIEW FROM BRITAIN

THE COLONIAL OFFICE AND THE BRITISH PRESS

It is evident that newspapers made positive contributions to West Indian political affairs. However, these were possibly outweighed by the disruptive impact of the press on colonial society. The colonists who became involved in conflicts with the press often regarded them as of great importance, and accorded them a stature which often outweighed their true significance. Despite this tendency to inflate what were often very petty incidents, few cases of press conflict reached London for adjudication at the Colonial Office. This naturally creates a problem in assessing the British Government's actions regarding the colonial press. A generalised interpretation of those actions, which could be construed as the Government's 'policy' towards the press, is hampered by the scarcity of evidence. It could plausibly be argued that the evidence which has been found merely shows that the man who held the office of Secretary of State for War and the Colonies at a particular time sanctioned an ad hoc judgement on those disputes which happened to reach him.[1] Accepting this line of argument means, therefore, that nothing further can be drawn from this other than simple statements that certain cases were decided in certain ways. However, it is possible to discern certain themes in the evidence which shows that wider political developments were reflected in decisions from the Colonial Office touching West Indian newspapers.

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[1]A despatch from the Secretary of State was not his own work. As well as the influence of James Stephen, which will be discussed below, other lower ranking officials also contributed to the resolution of problems sent from the colonies. Usually draft recommendations were transcribed as the official despatch from the Secretary of State. Adjudications could therefore be the work of several men: it is more accurate to talk about the response of the Colonial Office, rather than the Secretary of State. However, it is legitimate to consider despatches from the Colonial Office as being the opinion of Secretary of State, because presumably he would not have signed a despatch the contents of which he disagreed with.

Information about the activities of the press reached the Colonial Office in three ways. Firstly, there was the standard mode of transmitting information, via the colonial Governor. Colonial Governors had different views about what information they felt it was necessary to send back to the Colonial Office. Governor MacGregor of the Leewards had felt it was a matter of course to inform the Colonial Office about the incarceration of Samuel Cable and the exercise of the Royal Prerogative to reverse the decision.[2] Not all Governors were as efficient as MacGregor in keeping the Secretary of State apprized of colonial events. It seems likely that Sir William Nicolay of Dominica and Sir Patrick Ross of Antigua would not have informed the Colonial Office about the jailings of William Stewart and James Scotland Snr., had it not been for the efforts of the two editors themselves. Governor Nicolay admitted to being completely ignorant of Stewart's case, and Ross was censured for failing to supply adequate information about the Scotland case.[3] No doubt to some Governors, many of the disputes involving the press which have been examined appeared of so small a scale that there seemed little point in informing London.

The second way in which information reached the Colonial Office was through the ordinary postal system. This irregular method of communicating with the Colonial Office had been employed in October 1831 by St. Lucian colonists seeking to close The St. Lucia Gazette. In 1832, during the controversy over The Antigua Free Press, James Scotland Snr. had also used the ordinary postal system in an attempt to get his case heard at the Colonial Office. Such actions were disapproved of in London, and

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[2]C.O.239/40, MacGregor to Glenelg, 16 October 1835, no. 205.

[3]C.O.71/61, Nicolay to Bathurst, 10 December 1824, no. 27; C.O.393/3, Goderich to Ross, 2 January 1832, no. 21.

were the subject of circulars ordering all communications from colonists to go through the Governor.[4] The Governor was then supposed to use his discretion in deciding on cases which could be settled locally. In the St. Lucian case official disapproval did not prevent the Colonial Office intervening to grant the wish of the memorialists.[5] It was felt that the nature of this case was so peculiar there was no option but to intervene. In contrast, James Scotland Snr. was sent a copy of the regulations which governed the sending of communications to the Secretary of State with instructions to abide by them.[6]

The final way in which information about the press was received in London occurred when editors visited the Colonial Office in person. This practice was generally disapproved of; such visits were deemed unhelpful and the cause of much confusion.[7] Following the suppression of The Guiana Chronicle in November 1825, Alexander Stevenson, went to London to put his case at the Colonial Office. It is unclear if Stevenson had a personal interview with Bathurst, but he did submit a memorial and seems to have spoken to the Under Secretary, Robert Wilmot-Horton.[8] Stevenson's visit definitely helped his cause because the initial endorsement of

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[4]Colonial Office Circular, 29 April 1830, printed in The Trinidad Guardian, 25 June 1830. A further circular on this subject appears to have been sent on 17 November 1831. See C.O.854/1, Circular Despatches, 1808-1836.

[5]C.O.254/9, Goderich to Acting Governor of St. Lucia, 12 December 1831, no. 67.

[6]C.O.393/3, Goderich to Ross, 17 April 1832, no. 35.

[7]C.O.854/1, confidential circular to Colonial Governors, 10 October 1832. This circular actually referred to 'official' delegates from the colonies visiting the Colonial Office - presumably it was even more applicable to private individuals.

[8]C.O.111/55, D'Urban to Bathurst, 7 September 1826, no. 35. See also a private letter from D'Urban to Bathurst of the same date.

Governor D'Urban's suppression of The Chronicle was reversed.[9] It would seem that Matthew Barker, the editor employed by Stevenson at the time of the suppression, also visited the Colonial Office. He petitioned Bathurst, but his endeavours seem to have been unsuccessful.[10] Henry Loving adopted this course of action in 1831, when he visited London on his political mission for the Antiguan free coloureds. As with Stevenson and Barker, it is not clear if Loving actually met the Secretary of State, but he did correspond with the Under Secretary, Lord Howick. Loving's editorship of The Weekly Register and the dangers which he claimed he faced because of this political activity, formed part of this correspondence. Loving later printed this series of letters as a pamphlet, which was widely circulated in Antigua, where it made a considerable political impact.[11]

There were then, two factors which influenced the possibility of disputes involving the colonial press reaching London; the diligence of the executive and the tenacity of the editors themselves. These variable factors have left an uneven spread of evidence which limits any attempt to determine what, if any, was the British Government's attitude to the colonial press. However, there does seem to be one area where the attitude was clear and consistent. This concerned the relationship between officials of the colonial Government and the independently-owned press. The prevailing view was that colonial officials should not become involved with the press.

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[9]See C.O.112/6, Bathurst to D'Urban, 10 February 1826, no. 41, for initial approval of the suppression; Bathurst to D'Urban, 6 June 1826, no. 53, orders D'Urban to allow Stevenson to recommence publication.

[10]C.O.111/56, D'Urban to Wilmot-Horton, 19 September 1826, private.

[11]C.O.7/34, Ross to Goderich, 8 November 1832, no. 60, includes a copy of this pamphlet. Given that Loving actually corresponded with Viscount Howick, the pamphlet is misleadingly entitled Correspondence with the Right Honble. Viscount Goderich...

This extended not only to active involvement as publishers or contributors, but also to taking official notice of critical articles which appeared in the press. Despite William Rough's constant complaints about the printed abuse he suffered from The Guiana Chronicle during 1820 and 1821, the Under Secretary of State merely emphasised the need to ignore it:

> My own feelings are so averse to official men of any description publishing justifications of their official acts in the newspapers, or indeed noticing the attacks there made upon them, that I cannot but concur in the recommendation of Major General Murray that the better course is to let such falsehoods die away unnoticed...[12]

In 1836 in the same colony, the Governor, Sir James Carmichael-Smyth decided to ignore the vehement editorial criticism which The Chronicle had directed at both himself and the Guianan Court of Policy.[13] This decision was made despite pleas from the members of the Court to revoke the editor's printing license. Lord Glenelg, then Secretary of State, approved of Smyth's decision.[14] In 1833, Secretary of State Stanley had offered similar advice of non-interference to the Governor of Trinidad when dealing with the petition submitted by about fifty Catholics complaining about The Colonial Observer. These Catholics had petitioned Bishop Daniel MacDonnell, demanding that measures be implemented to restrain the paper.[15] Governor Hill forwarded the complaint to London, but was advised:

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[12]C.O.112/5, Goulburn to Rough, 22 July 1819, private.

[13]C.O.111/146, Carmichael-Smyth to Glenelg, 16 August 1836, no. 198.

[14]C.O.112/20, Glenelg to Carmichael-Smyth, 6 November 1836, no. 165.

[15]C.O.295/99, Catholic petition to Bishop MacDonnell, 28 October 1833, enclosed with no. 54. Signed by fifty-one people.

> ... I think that to take any official notice of it [the article] would only have the effect of giving importance to that which from its folly and vulgarity ought not to excite any other sentiment than contempt.[16]

Stanley did, however, advise Governor Hill to convey privately to Bishop MacDonnell his condemnation of the article.

In the eyes of the Colonial Office, it was totally unacceptable for officials to be actively involved with the privately-owned press. There are two cases where local Government officials were removed from office after their conduct with the press was seen as indiscreet. At the height of the campaign to remove William Rough from his position as President of the Demeraran Judiciary, William Tonge - who seems to have occupied a sinecure post of assistant Government Secretary - wrote to the editor of The Guiana Chronicle on the subject. Rough, who engaged in extensive correspondence with Under-Secretary of State Henry Goulburn during this period, sent the relevant edition of the paper to the Colonial Office. Goulburn obviously informed his superior, and Bathurst's response was emphatic:

> ... it is impossible to permit any public officer to assail them [decisions of the judiciary] by advertisement in a public newspaper or to promulgate opinions with respect to them which do not even profess to refer to their acts but to the motives to which the writer supposes them to originate.[17]

The Governor was ordered to remove Tonge from office immediately this despatch was received. The other example of unacceptable official conduct is from St. Lucia, and involves the rather complex situation with the Secretary to the Government of the

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[16]C.O.296/11, Stanley to Hill, 17 December 1833, private.

[17]C.O.112/5, Bathurst to Murray, 21 June 1821, unnumbered despatch.

colony, George Busteed. The situation whereby Busteed had enabled himself to edit The St. Lucia Gazette and claim the salary of the colony's official printer might have continued undisturbed had he not edited the paper in a provocative way. By using it as a means to 'check misconduct' and 'vice',[18] Busteed created tensions in St. Lucia and paved the way for the paper's closure. It was in response to a series of controversial articles in The Gazette that St. Lucian colonists organised a petition of complaint which was sent to the Colonial Office through the ordinary post. Although standard procedure was to ignore such ex-parte statements, in this instance it was deemed essential to respond. The petitioners had complained in particular about an editorial which contained allegations about Busteed trying to secure a young white woman as a concubine, and it also contained Busteed's admission of this fact. The Secretary of State reacted to this situation with incredulity:

> Assuming that this editorial paragraph was published by Mr Busteed himself, or with his concurrence, I am totally at a loss for expressions which would adequately convey my sense of the gross folly and impropriety of the whole transaction.[19]

The instructions to the acting Governor of St. Lucia were explicit. He was to ascertain if Busteed really was behind the objectionable article and if this was the case he was to be immediately removed from office. A comment in this despatch neatly encapsulates the view prevailing at the Colonial Office on the subject of Government officers becoming involved with the press:

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[18]C.O.253/30, Busteed to Mallet, 28 September 1831, enclosed with no. 25.

[19]C.O.254/9, Goderich to Acting Governor of St. Lucia, 12 December 1831, no. 67.

> ... I must further observe that the mere circumstance of a confidential public officer being concerned in the publication of a newspaper, discussing public affairs, is itself highly objectionable. Still more improper is it, that such a Journal should be supported at the public expense. The practice must be immediately discontinued.[20]

There is one other case where evidence shows that the Colonial Office felt that caution was needed when combining private involvement with the press and public duties. This involved Young Anderson of The Colonial Observer. Despite the several despatches which were sent to the Colonial Office concerning the disruptive influence of The Observer on a section of the Royal Trinidad Artillery, a reply specifically dealing with this problem was never actually sent back to Trinidad. However, a despatch was drafted and it is filed with Governor Hill's correspondence.[21] It contains a comment which serves as further proof that the Colonial Office felt it unwise for men of any standing to become involved with the colonial press. Anderson had printed pro-Government material in The Colonial Observer in the hope of receiving a reciprocal gesture of support from the colonial or British Governments. Stanley, then Secretary of State, responded:

> His reputation in the opinion of the Government whose views he professed to coincide with, would have stood on a much higher ground, if in his connection with a military body he had not given utterance to those political feelings,

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[20]Ibid.

[21]The despatch which was never sent is filed in C.O. 295/98, with no. 20. Presumably it was filed when this despatch was received from Trinidad. Two other despatches regarding The Colonial Observer are in C.O.296/11. The first is a private letter dated 17 December 1833, which deals with the Catholic complaint. The second is a confused response to events involving The Port of Spain Gazette and The Colonial Observer, 17 March 1834, no. 79.

> which as a member of the community and a civilian he may have entertained, when he found they interfered with the discipline of the Regiment, for which discipline as a senior Captain, he was responsible.[22]

Patronage as a reward for Anderson's journalistic endeavours was never seriously considered, and there are no signs that any colonial journalist was rewarded in the manner Anderson had envisaged. In 1827, William Schultz, the proprietor of The Berbice Gazette had suffered pecuniary losses for publishing material supportive of the British Government. Schultz's plea for a compensational pension was refused. This refusal had been preceded by a reprimand to the Lt. Governor from the Secretary of State, William Huskisson, over a particular extract from an English paper, which Schultz had printed in The Gazette. Huskisson noted that given the circumstances of the colony Schultz's conception of political loyalty to the British Government could be construed as counter-productive:

> The publication of paragraphs such as these is equally calculated to produce an impatient and distempered state of feeling in the slave population, and to excite dissatisfaction among the proprietors; and I regret to understand that you have allowed them to appear without conveying any admonition upon the subject to the proprietor of the newspaper.[23]

Presumably, Huskisson would have advocated a colonial press that was limited to publishing official announcements and commercial information. Colonial Office reluctance to reward political loyalty also affected James Scotland Snr. During the apprenticeship period Thomas Fowell Buxton had written to the Colonial Office on

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[22]Ibid.

[23]C.O.112/9, Huskisson to Beard, 20 October 1827, no. 4.

Scotland's behalf, but Lord Glenelg refused to award him with an office in the colonial administration.

The obvious corollary to this general mode of thinking at the Colonial Office was a refusal to sanction any sort of official Government involvement with the press. In Guiana and Jamaica the Colonial Office refused to support the attempts which were made under the auspices of the executive to establish newspapers, deeming it politically unwise. In Guiana, Governor Smyth's support for Henry Wells and his proposed newspaper, The Rising Sun, met with a negative response from the Secretary of State. Lord Glenelg opposed the arrangement in principle, citing the inevitable association that people would make between a newspaper financially supported by the Government and that Government itself. This assumed connection would then mean publically justifying everything which appeared in the paper as the official Government view. The Rising Sun, moreover, was a privately-owned paper which would introduce further political complications into any attempts to justify Government involvement.[24] Similar reluctance, tempered with sympathy, was evinced in 1838 over the case of The West Indian in Jamaica.[25] Despite the approval of the Governor, Sir Lionel Smith, James Stephen and Henry Taylor at the Colonial Office ruled out the possibility of guaranteeing any official help for the paper. As a result The West Indian collapsed after only nine months.

The Colonial Office advising against any sort of official involvement with the press was probably the result of the political tension which gripped the colonies during this period. The prospect of close links developing between the colonial Governments

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[24]C.O.112/19, Glenelg to Carmichael-Smyth, 14 August 1835, no. 28.

[25]This account is taken from Cave, 'To Instruct And Enlighten The Negro.'

and the press in this political climate, with all the ambiguities and difficulties which such links entailed, must have been viewed with disquiet at the Colonial Office. The publication of Government-sponsored newspapers and independent newspapers sympathetic to the British Government had met with considerable hostility, which further diminished the likelihood of the Colonial Office recommending a propaganda offensive in the West Indies. This could be seen as surprising given that successive British Governments had long made use of newspapers for political purposes. Although most British politicians publically disavowed any connections with newspapers a complex network of clandestine links existed between the Government and the press.[26] There were personal contacts, direct and indirect subsidies, and certain newspapers enjoyed access to information before their rivals. However, a major problem arising from this was the tendency for supposed Government papers to give only equivocal support, or in some cases to express outright hostility. An example of this from Britain is the Irish newspaper, The Patriot. Despite editorial conduct in the 1820's that angered Sir Robert Peel, The Patriot continued to receive subsidies.[27] Of course, disloyal newspapers ran the risk of losing their subsidies if they criticised the Government and this was a common enough occurrence. The Times, for example, lost contracts for the Customs House printing in 1805 after publishing political opinions that were deemed unacceptable. Evidently, the mere creation of political links between the Government and the press did not guarantee the unquestioning loyalty of a newspaper, and this drawback also applied in the colonies. However, perhaps the main reason for the Colonial Office's reluctance to tap the political power of the press was

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[26]Aspinall, Politics And The Press, p.198.

[27]Ibid. pp.142-144.

the fact that the cumulative experience of the British Government with respect to buying or bribing newspapers was simply not applicable in the West Indies; establishing a comparable web of patronage to control the press in the colonies would have been extremely difficult. The evidence does confirm the existence of indirect subsidies in the form of the contracts for printing Government business, but these had originally been introduced to increase the efficiency of the colonial economy. Only when the politicisation of the press gathered momentum in the 1820's did they become used as instruments of political control. The manipulation of newspapers by the British Government was therefore echoed in the West Indies, but it seems clear that most Governors tended to keep their distance from the press; it was a policy which had the backing of the Colonial Office.

There is much evidence which helps to determine what the British Government's attitude was to the press in the Crown colonies, because in these territories the freedom and role of the press were prominent issues in this period. There were marked differences between the Government's attitude towards those territories and towards the Legislative colonies. This discrepancy was a result of two things. Firstly, the legal and constitutional ambiguity which pervaded the Crown colonies for many years after they came under British control. Secondly, the Government exercised a stronger grip over the administration of the Crown colonies, and this increased scope to introduce measures against the press. An issue for the Trinidadian press, and a leading issue for Demeraran newspapers, seems to have been whether a free and independent press in the British tradition should have been permitted. This was not at stake in colonies such as Antigua, St. Kitts, or Barbados where British newspaper traditions had been established for much longer. When it became necessary for the British Government to inter-

vene in the Legislative colonies, it was intervention of a very different kind to that which occurred in the Crown colonies.

In the 1820's and 1830's the Demeraran and Trinidadian press was faced with particularly difficult circumstances. Demerara had to cope with the aftermath of the 1823 slave revolt; a period in which the colony was governed by a man who was deeply concerned with the role of the colony's newspapers. Trinidad's status as a Crown colony meant that its newspapers were uniquely placed to comment on the Orders in Council issued in the 1820's and 1830's. These Orders signposted the British Government's intentions regarding slavery in the colonies, and placed Trinidad and Demerara in the vanguard of political and social change. These factors led to the political profile of the press being raised to such an extent that the Colonial Office was forced to take notice.

Despatches from the Colonial Office to Demerara and Trinidad in the mid-1820's are not entirely consistent regarding the press, but they do show a tendency to advocate or endorse censorial measures. In one instance there is a despatch which explains why this was so. Instructions to censor the Demeraran press were sent from the Colonial Office in late May 1823, three months before the slave revolt. The reasoning was that for the sake of the colony's security, information contained in the colonial press had to be prevented from reaching the slaves. Lt. Governor Murray was also ordered to prevent the publication of any intemperate speeches made at public meetings. The view of the Colonial Office was clear; political reality counted for more than political principle - the security of the colony was more important than abstract ideas about the freedom of the press.[28]

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[28]C.O.112/5, Bathurst to Murray, 28 May 1823, private and confidential.

Similar advice was given to Governor Woodford of Trinidad in 1825. In contrast to Murray, who had received private and supplementary instructions to the introduction of a major piece of legislation, Woodford had actively sought the views of the Colonial Office as to the prudence of censoring The Trinidad Gazette. Woodford was aware that under Spanish law he was authorised to censor the press and he had added political leverage over William Lewer the proprietor, because of Lewer's position as the official Government printer. However, Woodford had still felt that it was necessary to seek the mandate of the Secretary of State.[29] Bathurst sanctioned the use of censorship, but as in the case of Demerara, there was no sign in this despatch that he was intrinsically hostile to the ideal of a free press. Again, the crucial factor was the likelihood of unsuitable information reaching the slave population.[30] The closure of The Trinidad Gazette in September 1825 removed the need to censor the paper. Curiously, Woodford never felt the necessity of censoring The Trinidad Guardian, which in the late 1820's was one of the more politically extreme planter papers. This reluctance may have been because The Guardian survived purely on its subscriber list and advertising revenue. The Governor was therefore denied the indirect control provided by the printing contract. A temporary successor to Woodford, James Farquharson, wanted to prosecute the editor of The Guardian. Farquharson described John Shoel as 'a perfect firebrand', but the Governor was dissuaded from taking legal action by his advisors.[31]

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[29]C.O.295/65, Woodford to Bathurst, 7 May 1825, no. 619.

[30]C.O.296/6, Bathurst to Woodford, 24 September 1825, no. 23.

[31]C.O.295/80, Farquharson to Secretary of State, 7 March 1829, no. 61. It is perhaps no surprise that Farquharson wanted to sue The Trinidad Guardian, as he seems to have been highly sensitive to press comment. During his time as Acting Governor of St. Lucia Farquharson officially complained to the Colonial Office about an article which appeared in an Antiguan paper, The Antigua Herald. See

Despite having received explicit orders to enforce the censorship of the press in May 1823, Lt. Governor Murray of Demerara failed to implement these instructions. A link between Murray's failure and the August rebellion was perceived at the Colonial Office. When Murray returned to London he was called upon to account for his lack of action.[32] The 1823 rebellion had a profound effect on Sir Benjamin D'Urban, but his efforts to control the press, which were consonant with Murray's 1823 instructions, met with only equivocal support from the Colonial Office. D'Urban took strong measures to control the press soon after he arrived in the colony. His warnings to the colony's proprietors were backed up by the suppression of The Colonist - an act which was designed as an example to any editor who may have been reluctant to follow D'Urban's instructions. These preliminary steps to control the press were endorsed without explanation by the Colonial Office, although no comment appears to have been made on the suppression of The Colonist. There is the possibility that the Colonial Office had seen an opportunity to control newspapers hostile to the British Government's aims, and to tighten the Crown's control. This is, however, to some extent refuted by the Secretary of State's actions over D'Urban's suppression of The Guiana Chronicle in November 1825. The decision was initially approved by London, although Bathurst sounded a cautionary note about such suppression being a lawful act.[33] Several months after this endorsement Bathurst changed his mind and overruled D'Urban's decision, almost certainly because Alexander Stevenson had lobbied at the Colonial Office. Stevenson may well have presented a distorted version

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C.O.253/39, Farquharson to Goderich, 22 May 1832, no. 55.

[32]C.O.111/44, Murray to Wilmot-Horton, 10 July 1824.

[33]C.O.112/6, Bathurst to D'Urban, 10 February 1826, no. 41.

of events - Governor D'Urban later claimed this to be the case.[34] As a compromise between suppression and unmonitored press freedom, Bathurst issued new licensing terms under which the Demeraran press would have to operate. These terms were slight alterations of the previous license, but they remained as vague as before. Their interpretation caused problems because D'Urban delegated the job of monitoring The Chronicle to a subordinate officer. Inevitably, the two men did not agree on what constituted a breach of the license.

Colonial Office inconsistency towards the press was also highlighted in Bathurst's next despatch on the subject, which suggested the introduction of a Stamp Tax on newspapers.[35] The reasoning behind the suggestion was that this would raise revenue, but Bathurst must have been aware of the politically repressive dimension of such a measure; in Britain the Stamp Tax was used to price information out of the reach of the lower classes. If this was indeed part of Bathurst's thinking it was a miscalculation. The class structure of Britain, which to some extent determined the nature of the Stamp Tax, was not analogous to that of Demerara, and the introduction of a Stamp Tax was rejected as irrelevant to the needs of the colony.[36]

The tension between The Guiana Chronicle and the Lt. Governor of Demerara is invaluable evidence because it continued under both Tory and Whig Ministries. If the change of Government was marked by a major change in political philosophy, it should have been apparent in the response of Whig Secretaries of State to the situation in Demerara. There is indeed evidence of a shift in attitudes at the Colonial Office,

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[34]C.O.111/55, D'Urban to Bathurst, 7 September 1826, no. 35.

[35]C.O.112/6, Bathurst to D'Urban, 22 June 1826, no. 57.

[36]C.O.111/56, D'Urban to Bathurst, 20 November 1826, private.

but it is uncertain. There was a definite change of emphasis away from endorsing censorial measures in the Crown colonies, but this did not constitute a decisive break with the past. Legal measures aimed at controlling newspapers were passed in Trinidad in 1834 and in Guiana in 1839. The Ordinance passed in Trinidad had been framed specifically as an answer to the persistent problems caused by The Colonial Observer. The colony's Legislative council felt that any delay whilst the approval of the British Government was sought 'would be productive of serious inconvenience' to the colony.[37] The Ordinance was immediately promulgated without Government approval, but this technical irregularity was overlooked by the Colonial Office. In his usual role as analyst of colonial laws James Stephen reported on the Ordinance, and whilst seeing nothing wrong in it, he pointedly wrote:

> I of course, decline as beyond my competency, all reference to those questions of general policy to which every law restrictive of the freedom of publication must give rise.[38]

Stanley, who was the only Secretary of State during this period to ignore Stephen's advice, wrote on the latter's report that the Ordinance was to be left in operation.[39] Royal assent was given in March, and the measure became law in Trinidad in May 1834. There is no indication that the Guianan measure was introduced for politically repressive reasons. It was presented as a way of overcoming possible problems in the legal system, and as a way of creating a Guianan press law analogous to British law.

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[37]C.O.298/9, minutes of the Trinidad Legislative and Executive Councils, 6 January 1834.

[38]C.O.323/50, Report by Stephen to Stanley, 24 February 1834.

[39]Knaplund, James Stephen, pp.30 and 107.

Again, this Ordinance received Royal assent with no real obstruction from the Imperial Government.

Altough this evidence suggests that there had not been decisive change at the Colonial Office, there were definite signs in the late 1820's of a relaxation in attitudes in comparison with a couple of years previously. This was probably a result of the influence of James Stephen at the Colonial Office. As legal counsellor to the Secretary of State Stephen's reports on West Indian affairs were apparently transferred almost verbatim into official despatches. The massive influence which he exercised at the Colonial Office was at its height during a period of some two and a half years before abolition, when Lord Goderich held the post.[40] Stephen's social and political beliefs are well known, although it is ironic that for someone who attempted to loosen controls on the colonial press he claimed that he never read newspapers and was appalled by the controversies the press generated.[41]

By 1827, the response from the Colonial Office to the continuing tension in Demerara was markedly different to the instructions issued between 1823 and 1825. In May 1827, Goderich responded to a plea from Lt. Governor D'Urban that the situation regarding The Guiana Chronicle (then being published under Bathurst's licensing terms), be clarified. The Secretary of State ordered D'Urban not to withdraw Stevenson's license, despite admitting to the fact that two articles in The Chronicle

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[40]William Green, 'James Stephen And British West India Policy, 1834-1847,'Caribbean Studies 13, 4, 1974, p.34. Mary Reckord 'The Colonial Office And The Abolition of Slavery,' The Historical Journal 14, 4, 1971, p.723, agrees that in 1831 emancipation replaced amelioration as the policy objective amongst officials at the Colonial Office. The influence of Stephen and Taylor at this juncture was critical.

[41]Knaplund, James Stephen, pp.16-17.

had contravened the licensing terms set down by Bathurst.[42] D'Urban was further advised in a private letter that if any situations arose which seemed to warrant the suppression of The Guiana Chronicle, the relevant information was first to be sent to London for consideration at the Colonial Office. In this despatch, the wish to prevent D'Urban exercising any decisions that might be heavy-handed was clear.[43] By the early 1830's, the differences between the Lt. Governor of Demerara and the Colonial Office had become more explicit. In March 1831, D'Urban suppressed The Guiana Chronicle for a second time. In what constituted a notable step forward on previous despatches, the point was made not only about the disruption to the circulation of commercial information, but also the loss of:

> ... that degree of controul [sic] over the administration of affairs, which public opinion, expressed through the medium of the press, cannot fail to exercise, and which is not without its use even under the best and wisest Governments.[44]

This acceptance that the press had a positive political role to play was carefully qualified by a restatement of the need for discretion in slave territories. Goderich felt that D'Urban had overestimated the importance of The Guiana Chronicle, and considered his repressive response totally out of proportion to the situation. D'Urban was advised that in future the regulation of The Chronicle should be left to the operation of the libel laws. However, D'Urban's disregard for the instructions to lift the ban on The Chronicle was based on a conviction that events which had taken place

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[42]C.O.112/6, Goderich to D'Urban, 7 June 1827, no. 10.

[43]Ibid. Goderich to D'Urban, 7 June 1827, private.

[44]C.O.112/15, Goderich to D'Urban, 30 May 1831, no. 19.

as Goderich's despatch was coming across the Atlantic had rendered the Secretary of State's directions inappropriate.[45] Goderich responded to this refusal to implement his directive by expressing only equivocal support for D'Urban. He accepted that the particular course which events had taken prevented D'Urban from revoking the order suppressing the paper, but he insisted that the general principles outlined in the earlier communication had to be adhered to in future.[46] If the legal judgement endorsed the claim of the executive to control the press, D'Urban was also advised to intimate to Stevenson a readiness to accept any request for a new license to restart The Chronicle the printer might make. It was advice which D'Urban appears to have ignored. The despatch went on to point out that the only justification for suppressing a colonial newspaper was if:

> ... the press is used in a manner which is calculated to create disturbance amongst the slaves either by working upon them immediately or by propagating excited feelings to them from the other classes of the Colonial Society...[47]

This perhaps shows the true extent of the shift of emphasis at the Colonial Office regarding newspapers in the Crown colonies. The ideal of a free press, regulated only by the libel laws, was in circulation at the Colonial Office, but it had to be conducted with a view to the social and political realities of slave territories. This in itself was arguably putting misplaced faith in the colonial press; there were numerous examples of West Indian newspapers blithely printing material of the most provocative kind during periods of social and racial tension.

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[45]C.O.111/116, D'Urban to Goderich, 15 August 1831, no. 10.

[46]C.O.112/15, Goderich to D'Urban, 3 November 1831, no. 59.

[47]Ibid.

Many of the despatches from the Governor of Demerara, and some of the replies from the Secretary of State were private communications, perhaps indicating unease at the possibly hostile public reception repressive instructions would receive. Indeed, in justifying his rejection of Bathurst's proposals for a Stamp Tax on the Demeraran press, Sir Benjamin D'Urban cited likely opposition from English colonists.[48] It is difficult to imagine the Colonial Office successfully issuing instructions for establishing governmental control of the press in the Legislative colonies. In these colonies the central issue was not whether a free and independent press was a viable option; newspapers were too firmly entrenched as components of colonial life for that ever to be seriously questioned. It was the issues raised by the press, specifically the corruption and malpractice that pervaded the colonial judiciaries, which came under discussion. The treatment of the editors of The Antigua Free Press and The St. Kitts Advertiser exposed these practices, and it was primarily to these that the Colonial Office reacted. It was in this way that the campaigning journalism of colonial newspapers had an impact at the highest level. The supportive decisions from London also adds weight to the idea of there being a shift of sympathies at the Colonial Office in a more liberal direction in the 1830's. In the case of The St. Kitts Advertiser this extended to open expressions of approbation at the editor's journalistic conduct.

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[48]C.O.111/56, D'Urban to Bathurst, 20 November 1826, private.

The legal proceedings which had led to the imprisonment of James Scotland Snr. were of questionable legality, and from the point of view of the Colonial Office, this was the crux of the matter; malpractice in the Antiguan judicial system had resulted in the imprisonment of a private citizen. The main despatch on the subject from the Colonial Office - presumably drafted by Stephen - is primarily concerned with this aspect of the situation. It is a good example of Stephen's concern about the conduct of those governing the colonies. The first despatch on the subject of Scotland's imprisonment was a brief note which ordered his immediate release and pardon from the imposition of securities.[49] This alone could be interpreted as support for Scotland's position as a journalist, and it was seen in this way by James McQueen, who argued that the Colonial Office was protecting a journalist who was politically useful to the British Government.[50] Scotland's radical views were known in Britain (later numbers of his paper were actually addressed to the Secretary of State[51]), so it is possible that the Government welcomed having so public an ally in the West Indies. However, there is no evidence that the British Government ever supplied financial support for The Antigua Free Press despite the paper's political loyalty. The explanatory despatch from the Colonial Office which explained the rationale behind the order to release Scotland, is dated 2 January 1832. It showed that concerns for Scotland's role as a journalist were not central to the logic behind the judgement, or at least they were not publicly admitted to be. McQueen's allegations that political

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[49]C.O.393/3, Goderich to Ross, 22 December 1831, no. 18.

[50]The Port of Spain Gazette, 11 January 1833. This contained MacQueen's *Address to The British West Indian Colonists*, which asserted that Goderich was protecting both of the Antiguan editors because of their anti-slavery stance.

[51]The first edition of The Free Press addressed to the Secretary Of State was 16 August 1832.

bias lay behind the decision are also undermined by the overruling of Sir Benjamin D'Urban's suppression of The Guiana Chronicle - a decision which benefitted a newspaper that was solidly pro-planter.

Two versions of the despatch which explained the decision to release Scotland survive. The first, which appears to be a rough draft, was written in language fiercely critical of the Antiguan Grand Jury, the Judges on the Court of King's Bench, and Governor Ross.[52] The despatch which was actually sent was rewritten in a more moderate tone, although it retained the essence of the criticisms. Goderich felt that although Scotland's incarceration may have been strictly lawful, the Court had misused its powers. The Antiguan Grand Jury, which had initiated the whole business, was also criticised, and Governor Ross was censured for failing in a basic duty of supplying adequate information about the affair. This criticism caused considerable controversy in Antigua, and the affair continued well into 1832 with the aggrieved parties forwarding letters of protest and explanation to the Colonial Office. Interestingly, the answers to these communications show that Colonial Office support for Scotland was not entirely solid. For example, Scotland's letter about the threat of a conspiracy to destroy The Free Press was described as exaggerated.[53] The Antiguan Attorney General, William Lee, had also submitted an account of events in the Courtroom, and this was totally at variance with Scotland's. It was perhaps inevitable that the Secretary of State should have accepted Lee's version, although he expressed disappointment that Lee had failed to advise the Judges about the indiscretion of

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[52]C.O.7/31, Unsigned, undated, cancelled despatch, included with no. 33.

[53]C.O.393/3, Goderich to Ross, 2 February 1832, no. 26.

following the course they had chosen.[54] The reason for this equivocal support for Scotland from the Colonial Office probably stemmed from a sense of irritation that although the matter had been decided by early January 1832 both sides would not let it rest. This irritation is evident in the later despatches on the subject; eventually, the Colonial Office refused to be drawn into further comment on the situation.[55]

Similar concerns about the impartial administration of justice were evident in the Colonial Office's dealings with the imprisonment of Samuel Cable in 1835. Unlike the Scotland case, where the political role of The Antigua Free Press was not overtly raised, The St. Kitts Advertiser was specifically praised for its part in exposing malpractices in the Courts:

> If the Judges are really planters, the assertion, that they were interested in the question before them, was perfectly true, and if true - I think that Mr Cable acted meritoriously in calling the public attention to it in respectful and decorous language.[56]

Cable had been jailed for three months on 11 September.[57] The Governor, Sir Evan MacGregor acted on his own initiative to intervene and order Cable's release, and details of the case were routinely sent to the Colonial Office. MacGregor's decision to release Cable was approved, and it is clear that the fundamental concern of the

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[54]Ibid. Goderich to Ross, 10 June 1832, no. 38.

[55]Ibid. Goderich to Ross, 1 January 1833, no. 56.

[56]C.O.239/40, Glenelg to MacGregor, 14 December 1835, no. 41. There is some confusion over whether or not this despatch was actually sent. It is filed with Governor MacGregor's own despatch on this subject, 16 October 1835, no. 205.

[57]Ibid. Cable's petition to President Crooke, 14 September 1835, enclosed with no. 205.

Colonial Office centred on the dangers of having interested parties administer justice in the colony. Glenelg wrote:

> Notwithstanding the weight due to the authority of that Tribunal on all ordinary occasions, I am compelled to regard with some hesitation any judgement of theirs in which the Members of the Court were also the Parties and Accusers.[58]

Concern was also expressed about the way Cable had been summarily incarcerated without a trial by jury. As in Antigua, the Judges on the Bench attempted to justify their conduct, but their protestations were dismissed.[59]

Both of these incidents revealed how corruption was deeply embedded in the judiciaries of Antigua and St. Kitts; they provide yet more evidence that local administration of justice in the West Indies was deeply flawed. However, these events also involved an important political principle - the freedom of the press. For the Colonial Office this was certain to cause some difficulties because the political views Scotland and Cable expressed in The Antigua Free Press and The St. Kitts Advertiser were deeply unpopular with the ruling whites. Dealing with these cases therefore required considerable tact, especially given the Colonial Office's wish that West Indian newspapers should always be kept at a distance by officials; intervention on the side of the editor could easily be construed as bias. Generally, the freedom of the press seems to have been accepted at the Colonial Office by this time, but there was still a distinct reluctance to become embroiled in defending that freedom on the grounds that it was

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[58]C.O.407/5, Glenelg to MacGregor, 31 December 1835, no. 40.

[59]See C.O.239/42, MacGregor to Glenelg, 4 March 1836, no. 42, enclosures, for the Judges explanation of their conduct. For Glenelg's reply, C.O.407/5, Glenelg to MacGregor, 9 May 1836, no. 68.

an inalienable political right. The Colonial Office approached the situation by responding primarily to the problem of judicial corruption, rather than to the political stimulus provided by repressive attacks on two liberal newspapers which supported the British Government. Thus, although the political dimensions of these cases were known, the rationale behind intervening in favour of Scotland and Cable was founded on the desire to ensure sound judicial practice in British colonies - the influence of James Stephen was clear. By adopting this approach the Colonial Office was able to deal with the two problems at once; the freedom of the press could be quietly protected, and particularly flagrant abuses of the law committed by those administering it could be countered.

Despite an obvious desire not to become entangled with disputes involving the colonial press, there were times when the Secretary of State had no choice in the matter. The often inadvertent involvement of the Colonial Office with West Indian newspapers stretched over a sufficient number of years to show that there was a limited but definite shift in official attitudes towards those papers. After 1827 - a period which saw signs of the emerging Whig dominance of British politics - there was a move away from recommending censorial measures. The tentative nature of this shift is not perhaps surprising given the capricious nature of the Whigs in Government, but politically a more relaxed approach to the West Indian press was definitely evident during these years. This is interesting in light of the political storm that raged as abolition edged closer; at a time when the Colonial Office might have been expected to order a Governor to introduce or tighten existing controls on the press, the opposite instructions were issued.

Yet within this general development there is also a sense of distinct continuity. The Colonial Office consistently kept the press at arms length, and it was felt that subordinate officials in the colonies should do the same. To that end deliberate political engagement between the colonial Governments and the press was resisted. In the final analysis the most enduring characteristic of the Colonial Office's relations with newspapers in the West Indies during this period remained pragmatic flexibility. Thus, in Demerara in the mid-1820's, the Secretary of State could overturn the suppression of The Guiana Chronicle, whilst shortly after suggest the introduction of a Stamp Tax. Even after the general shift in attitudes had occurred, officials at the Colonial Office maintained their ability to respond flexibly to events without becoming too deeply involved with them. In 1831, despite his obvious reluctance to do so, the Secretary of State accepted Sir Benjamin D'Urban's second suppression of The Chronicle. Around the same time and in contrast to the decision affecting Guiana, the freedom of the press was quietly preserved in Antigua. Four years later the Colonial Office endorsed Governor MacGregor's decision to release Samuel Cable, which helped to preserve the freedom of the press in St. Kitts. The inconsistencies between these three decisions were rooted in the different political conditions of the colonies. In Antigua and St. Kitts conditions were suitable for such decisive intervention whereas in Demerara they were not. Pragmatism, rather than an adherence to political principles which protected the freedom of the press as a matter of course, remained the most important aspect of the Colonial Office's attitude towards the West Indian press.

The relationship between the colonial press and the British press was shaped by both practical and political considerations. From a practical point of view, colonial

editors were forced to rely partly on the British press for news. They filled their papers with overseas extracts for the simple reason that domestic news did not constitute enough to fill a four page newspaper. There were two attempts to organise the informal interchange which went on between colonial and British papers on a commercial footing. The first attempt was planned by William Lewer, who until September 1825 had edited The Trinidad Gazette. When the paper closed, Lewer announced his intention to return to London and establish a news agency, on the same lines as those which catered for the British provincial press. It was intended to serve as an organised outlet in Britain for news from the colonies, and as a method of supplying regular British news back to the West Indies. In addition to the normal 1 and 1/2 d. postage, Lewer planned to charge a subscription of £2. 2s. 6d. for sending daily papers; £1. 11s. 6d. for bi- and tri-weekly papers; and 1s. for weekly papers.[60] There are no signs that this venture was successful. A further effort was made in 1828, by a man called Edward Willmer who was based in Liverpool. The Trinidad Guardian published an advertisement from Willmer offering to forward newspapers and magazines to subscribers living in the colonies. Subscriptions for a daily paper cost £6. 10s. per annum.[61] Again, there are no signs that this venture was successful, and there is no explanation for the large discrepancy between the subscription terms offered by Lewer and Willmer.

The political aspect of the British-West Indian press relationship shows clear signs of being symbiotic. Most editors selected articles from British papers which

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[60]The Port of Spain Gazette, 21 September 1825; The Dominica Chronicle, 9 November 1825. Both published Lewer's advertisement.

[61]The Trinidad Guardian, 19 September 1828.

roughly suited the political allegiance of their own papers, although sometimes they drew on opposition sources in an attempt to expose and ridicule their political enemies. In the case of the planter press there was a marked tendency to utilise The Glasgow Courier and John Bull. There appear to be no extant copies of either paper, but from extracts reprinted in the colonial press it is evident that both were strongly committed to the planter cause. James McQueen of The Glasgow Courier had established his name amongst the colonial press by at least the mid-1820's.[62] Planter papers referred to McQueen by a variety of epithets; the 'tried and fearless advocate,' or 'the able and unflinching advocate.'[63] Planter regard for McQueen extended beyond printed praise. When he toured the colonies in the early 1830's public dinners were given in his honour.[64] There was also recognition of the potential value of McQueen's paper in a political struggle. In late 1825, The Dominica Chronicle reported coordinated moves in different colonies to raise money to enable McQueen to relocate his newspaper to London. The Chronicle commented:

> Let us enable him to remove to the Headquarters of our enemies, and combat them hand to hand. This is almost the only effectual means we possess of tearing off the mask from our hypocritical persecutors, and exposing their wilful misrepresentations, and if we neglect this opportunity, we shall fall unpitied, and richly deserve every evil, with which we are threatened.[65]

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[62]See, for example, The Dominica Chronicle, 28 September 1825.

[63]The Grenada Free Press, 27 June 1832; The Port of Spain Gazette, 14 July 1832.

[64]See, for example, The Port of Spain Gazette, 18 January 1833.

[65]The Dominica Chronicle, 7 December 1825.

The assumption was that the press was a key means through which political discourse took place. Relocating The Glasgow Courier to London would remove the practical problem of distributing the paper to the most important commercial and political British city, and it would also quicken The Courier's response to the abolitionist challenge. The venture, however, appears to have been unsuccessful.

Colonial recognition of the value of the British press in presenting the planter case seems to have been widespread. There were comments made in colonial papers regarding the value of The Glasgow Courier, John Bull, and other sympathetic papers, but there were also complaints about the alleged apathy and ignorance of those journals which were not active in defending the planters.[66] There are other signs that colonists recognised the value of the British press. In January 1832, The Grenada Free Press printed the resolutions of a meeting of St. Lucian colonists called in protest against the Order in Council promulgated in November 1831. The twelfth resolution stated:

> That the resolution be published in the Trinidad, Demerara, and Barbados Colonial papers, and in London and Glasgow papers.[67]

The relationship between the colonial and British press flowed in both directions in a circuitous exchange of information and opinions. It is known that The Glasgow Courier, John Bull, and other British papers extracted articles from the colonial press, but the extent of this practice is unclear. Evidence that the colonial press was used in this way comes from articles in the British press which were sent

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[66]For positive comments about the British press see The Port of Spain Gazette, 8 February, 9 May 1832; The Trinidad Guardian, 13 May 1828; The Barbados Globe, 15 June 1829, 9 July 1832. For the opposite viewpoint see The Trinidad Guardian, 2 October 1827, 15 February 1828.

[67]Resolutions of a meeting of St. Lucian planters and merchants, 4 January 1832, printed in The Grenada Free Press, 18 January 1832.

back to the colonies and in turn reprinted by the colonial papers. For example, in 1832, The Antigua Free Press, then edited by James Scotland, printed a report from The Morning Herald on the controversy in Jamaica surrounding The Watchman, Edward Jordon, and his trial for libel.[68] Obviously, The Herald must first have drawn on a West Indian paper for its report. The conflicts involving the colonial press in the 1820's and 1830's were a source of considerable discussion in British newspapers. In July 1826, The Dominica Chronicle carried an undated report from The Courier which was highly critical of the system of Government in Demerara that had led to the suppression of The Guiana Chronicle.[69] The Glasgow Courier published news of the reversal of the decision to suppress The Guiana Chronicle and this was reprinted in another British paper, The Globe And Traveller. The Traveller was in turn forwarded to the colonies where The Trinidad Guardian used it.[70] Following his imprisonment between April and May 1829, Robert Priest of The Antigua Free Press published a sympathetic article from The World. Priest added:

> We understand that some of the English papers are unmercifully severe on the above business, and we know a great deal more too connected with it which we withhold till a fitting opportunity.[71]

However, the articles promised were never published.

The reciprocal relationship between planter newspapers and their supporters in Britain was mirrored by the liberal press. The liberal four all made use of suitable

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[68]The Antigua Free Press, 16 August 1832.

[69]The Dominica Chronicle, 5 July 1826.

[70]The Trinidad Guardian, 21 July 1826.

[71]The Antigua Free Press, 28 August 1829.

propaganda which was imported into the colonies. The Antigua Free Press and The Weekly Register for example, both used material from The Anti-Slavery Reporter and The Christian Advocate. Some of the articles they published were daring in the extreme. The Antigua Free Press printed one article from The Christian Advocate which claimed the slave, not the master, was entitled to financial compensation.[72] Both Antiguan papers had become well-known because of their political views and on at least one occasion a British journal drew on them specifically as a source for propaganda. This was The Anti-Slavery Reporter, which made extensive use of The Free Press and The Weekly Register in its edition of 25 October 1831.[73] This quoted at length from The Free Press of 28 July and 18 August 1831, and The Register of 9 August and 23 August 1831. The public reception of this material in Britain is unrecorded, but it had a considerable impact in Antigua; in response to allegations of cruelty and neglect towards the slaves contained in The Anti-Slavery Reporter Governor Ross wrote to the Secretary of State to clear his name.[74]

It is impossible to draw any detailed conclusions about the overall contribution to political events of colonial newspapers at an Imperial level. Perhaps the only statement that can be safely made is that a trans-Atlantic traffic in newspapers and information did take place; colonial and British newspapers therefore contributed to the political debates of the period in both the colonies and the metropole. Although it has been possible to gain some idea of the destabilising influence papers such as

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[72]See the article from The Christian Advocate reprinted in The Antigua Free Press, 14 February 1833.

[73]I have not had access to any other copies of The Anti-Slavery Reporter from this period.

[74]C.O.7/31, Ross to Goderich, 20 December 1831, no. 39. This despatch includes a copy of this edition of The Anti-Slavery Reporter.

John Bull and The Glasgow Courier had in the colonies, measuring a colonial newspaper's impact in Britain is faced with difficulties which are beyond the scope of this study. Colonial newspapers from across the political spectrum were certainly shipped to Britain, and used in the propaganda battle over abolition, but the effects of these papers are impossible to trace. Material from the colonial press which reached a wider audience through circulation in the British press must have been simply consumed by the sheer size and intensity of the debate about slavery.

CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION

West Indian newspapers performed two specific functions in the final years of slavery. The first was to act as a conduit for commercial information. This had been the main purpose of early colonial newspapers, and it remained of critical importance throughout the period under study. Even at the height of the abolition crisis newspapers remained the standard means of publicising commercial news. In this sense newspapers were vital to the smooth functioning of the colonial economy. The second function newspapers performed became progressively more important during the 1820's. This was to disseminate news in the home colony and throughout the other islands through the press interchange system. This may appear to be stating the obvious, but the important point lies in the nature of the news that was published. This underwent a change as the problem of slavery came to be a central preoccupation for the British Government. Earlier colonial newspapers had printed borrowed news - mainly British domestic and foreign - but this had been rendered politically innocuous by publication out of its original context. The 1820's saw a huge increase in the amount of news published in colonial papers which was specific to the West Indies. By publishing this news the press substantially altered its position within the colonies; a subtle, complex, and sometimes inadvertent change of role resulted. It was a role which went far beyond simply distributing commercial information, and it raised basic questions about how newspapers could be accommodated in societies as necessarily repressive as the West Indies.

One crucial generalisation about colonial newspapers which stemmed from the change in the sort of news which was published can be made; in the decade preceding abolition the press became highly politicised. This process did not happen at the same

time and in the same way throughout the colonies, but the general direction was the same. For example, newspapers such as The Trinidad Gazette, The Port of Spain Gazette, The Weekly Register, and The Dominica Chronicle are notable for having become political; they abandoned the editorial timidity which had been maintained for many years. Others, such as The Trinidad Guardian and The Antigua Herald were specifically established for political purposes. The massive inflow of news concerning the developing crisis over slavery had inevitably led to editorial columns. These further sharpened the political relevance of imported news because editors specifically related it to their home colonies. Thus, the burgeoning political content of the colonial press at this time was largely stimulated by political developments in Britain. At the beginning of the decade political editorials were still unknown in many colonial newspapers, yet within ten years they were normal and the politicisation of the West Indian press was virtually complete. By 1830 all of the colonial newspapers which I have looked at were edited by men whose motives were primarily political. Within the space of a decade newspapers had moved from being passive distributors of commercial information to active contributors to the political discourse carried on in the colonies. In itself, this change represented a major shift in the political culture of the British West Indies.

Newspaper editors in slave-based colonies were placed in positions of considerable responsibility; a responsibility that increased as the political content of the press rose. The publication of explicitly political material carried serious implications for the maintenance of colonial stability, which ultimately depended on the docility of the labouring population. By gaining access to political material and then using it in a politically-conscious way, the slaves undermined the passivity on which the entire

system rested. In the colonies, the perennial debate concerning the degeneration of the freedom of the press into mere licentiousness therefore had a framework which was totally different (and arguably more dangerous), from that in which British newspapers were produced.

Yet there are signs that until the beginning of the 1820's at least some elements of colonial society had viewed this subject from a British rather than a colonial perspective. For example, in Trinidad in 1810 and then in Demerara in 1819, George Smith and William Rough had complained that the freedom of the press had become simple licentiousness. Smith did have an eye for the wider political implications of this change, but from the point of view of its detrimental effects on Trinidad's attachment to the British Empire. There seemed to be no concern that the alleged politicisation of The Trinidad Courant was taking place in a slave society. In Demerara, William Rough gave no sign that he considered The Guiana Chronicle's attacks on him in a wider political light. At least one colonial editor appeared to share this perspective. In 1819, the political feuding in Barbados and the appearance of The Barbados Globe had drawn a response from an Antiguan paper which contained no reference to the particular security issues that were attendant on the freedom of the colonial press. This paper was primarily concerned with the improper criticism of the Governor that had appeared in sections of the Barbadian press:

> The Liberty of the press has very properly been described as the Palladium of our Rights, and, as such, ought to be preserved inviolate; but we should be careful lest, in our enthusiasm for its support, we suffer ourselves to be betrayed into improper measures.[1]

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[1]Unnamed Antiguan paper, 3 August 1819, reprinted in The Barbados Mercury, 21 August 1819.

The editor seemed unaware that the publication of political articles had a dimension relevant to the institution of slavery, despite the fact that this was the most important factor affecting the West Indian press. Directly or indirectly, slavery determined a large amount of the content of a newspaper, and it posed a critical dilemma for an editor, between the needs of white security which entailed self-censorship, and political customs that accepted open and often impassioned debate as a norm of public behaviour. Some earlier editors had been fully aware of this problem, for example, Edward Henery at The Demerary And Essequebo [sic] Royal Gazette. In January 1815, Henery announced his intention to continue with his '*excluding* system' with regard to:

> ... any communication, that aims at the feelings of individuals, or is calculated to sow discensions [sic] in the community at large. We shall in time, strive for the publication of solely a **NEWS** paper.[2]

Henery's intention was presumably to return to the editorial style he had employed during his time at The Essequebo And Demerary Gazette, which was a newssheet devoid of political content. Another editor who was clearly aware of the colonial press dilemma was William Walker at The Barbados Mercury. The Mercury started the 1820's as little more than a newssheet aimed at circulating commercial information and keeping colonists abreast of news from Britain. This was Walker's deliberate editorial policy. Aware of the dangers posed by political newspapers in slave colonies - an awareness almost certainly sharpened by the impact of the 1816 slave revolt in Barbados - Walker exercised self-censorship. The first editorial of any substance that has been found in The Mercury in the 1820's was an observation on the 1823 Demeraran slave revolt. The paper stated:

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[2]The Demerary And Essequebo [sic] Royal Gazette, 3 January 1815.

> Being fully sensible of the mischievous consequences that were likely to result from entering into a discussion of certain subjects which have of late been brought before the British House of Commons, we were not at all surprised to hear that serious disturbances have taken place in one of the Colonies of Great Britain in these seas.[3]

After this Walker reimposed editorial silence on The Mercury; a silence which he persisted with until at least early 1825. By 1833 The Mercury had been through several changes of ownership, and in place of the caution exercised by Walker the political editorial had become a standard feature; The Mercury had been swept along by the political tide with the rest of the West Indian press.

These changes in the colonial press were remarkable given the view, widely held by whites, that it was impossible to seal political discourse within the white elite. Several editors openly commented on the fact that information in their papers reached the slaves. The colonial editor was faced with an insoluble problem that all polemical writers encounter, but one which in the colonial context entailed potentially portentous consequences. Political editorials impacted upon areas of colonial society which were beyond the reach and understanding of the men who wrote them. An article which an editor thought unambiguous or innocuous might have been transformed once it left the printing office and entered the wider realm of colonial society. Incorrect or out of date news and opinions printed in the press acquired different meanings depending on who read them. By the time information reached those at the bottom of society it had been transmitted through several intermediary layers, and for the great mass of slaves who heard, rather than read, outright distortions were inevitable. During the years

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[3]The Barbados Mercury, 30 August 1823.

approaching abolition editors were thus presented with a straightforward but difficult choice; they could refrain from discussing political subjects, avoid agitating the slaves, but at the same time close an important political forum. Or they could publish political material and risk discussions of the slave question filtering down into the slave population. Despite the fact that this dilemma became more acute as the 1820's progressed, without exception the latter course was adopted. Why this was the case when it was accepted that such material had a destabilising effect on the slave population is among the more important questions pertaining to the press in this period.

Part of the explanation possibly lies in white misunderstanding of both the cause and the symptoms of the collapse in slave deference. Most editors undoubtedly shared the prevailing white view about the low level of slave intelligence; it therefore follows that they thought that slaves were too ignorant to do anything constructive with political information which might come into their possession. Obviously, the masters did not see slave rebellions and resistance as constructive political choices made in reaction to oppressive conditions; rather, they were viewed as crude reactions to inaccurate information spread by saboteurs. There were no substantial faults in the system of slavery; the blame for unrest lay with anti-colonial forces which were deliberately weakening colonial society. This self-delusion reinforced itself as whites cited insurrection and insubordination as further proof that slaves were inferior beings who, in the absence of coercion, knew of no other way to conduct themselves than through violence.

Whites who held these views were unable to conceive of the capacity that slaves had for political thought and action; that they possessed these faculties is evident. Although it is impossible to trace the effect of specific editorials on those

slaves who obtained access to them, the general manner in which literate and politically-conscious slaves used the press has been established. These slaves used the colonial press, and through its pages the British press, to gauge the political situation. They then used this information to manipulate illiterate slaves, presumably by convincing them that armed revolt could abolish slavery. In this way newspapers must have been inadvertently influential when slaves made the decision violently to resist their masters.[4]

As well as a failure to comprehend the intolerable nature of slavery from a slave's point of view, there were other factors which explain the often reckless politicisation of the press. These touch upon certain fundamental aspects of white political culture in the colonies. It may have been the case that some editors, drawing upon the white colonial tradition of political assertiveness, were so determined to express their opinions that they rejected all other considerations. Such purity of editorial purpose may well have been augmented by more pragmatic reasons; tapping and expressing white political feelings probably yielded financial benefits. Perhaps the most plausible explanation is simply that editors were forced by events into a situation which left them no middle ground. Edward Henery and William Walker refrained from discussing political subjects for fear of inadvertently fomenting slave unrest, but the results were newspapers politically enfeebled and unable to comment on the most important issues of the day. Other editors might have wanted to remain politically quiescent, but considerable pressures must have been exerted on them to reflect some degree of political feeling in the colonies. The colonial history of white political assertiveness suggests that it would have been almost impossible for newspapers - the

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[4]See above p.20.

most important available means of carrying on continual political discourse - to remain silent during events which to many seemed destined to end in disaster. Despite the risks, most editors positively embraced the role of political spokesmen, and some of them clearly welcomed the importance that political events in the 1820's and early 1830's accorded them.

Chronic racial and social tensions were inevitably generated by the massive difficulties of abolishing slavery. Thus, the task of determining if the press actually created these tensions or merely reflected them, is made somewhat easier, and we can be fairly confident in assessing the relationship between the colonial press and the white population during this period. Colonial newspapers certainly expressed the political feelings of some colonists, but it is likely that the contribution of newspapers to the creation of these feelings was minimal. I therefore hesitate before applying to other colonies the view of one scholar who wrote of the Jamaican press in this period, that it 'was a force to be reckoned with in the *formation* and expression of public opinion.'[5] [my emphasis]. The atmosphere of the colonies in this period was tense, paranoid, politically assertive, and unstable; the extreme feelings and opinions which flourished in this political climate would have existed even if political newspapers had not been published.

The overall politicisation of the colonial press was followed by pronounced differences in the political allegiance of individual newspapers. These differences can be usefully analysed in the light of two criteria. Firstly, the ethnic origins of the owners must be established. The resulting division of the West Indian press into some

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[5]Brathwaite, Development of Creole Society, p.37.

twenty-five white-owned and four free coloured newspapers must then be modified by acknowledging the political factors which cut across the racial divide.[6] The racial division of the press is unavoidable because race was central to all social, economic, and political relationships in the colonies. Newspapers owned by whites and newspapers owned by free coloureds unavoidably existed on different levels, in both practical and political terms. The white, planter-supporting press enjoyed certain advantages which accrued from supporting a ruling elite; for example, in the allocation of printing contracts. In contrast, purely on a basis of racial loyalty, free coloured newspapers had a potentially larger pool of readers. However, categorisations of newspapers according to the colour of their owners are not strict; they are blurred by political factors.

Naturally, most of the white-owned press reacted with hostility to the changes that the British Government attempted to impose, but even within the pages of the planter press there were marked differences of opinion. These stemmed from the highly personalised nature of newspaper ownership, which gave individuals the chance to air their opinions in the editorial column. Opinions were certain to differ when it came to suggestions for tackling the abolition crisis, and newspapers ostensibly on the same political side openly clashed. For example, The Barbadian described The Jamaica Courant as 'abusive and violent', and an affront to 'all decency and decorum.'[7] The two major Trinidadian papers of the period were bitterly divided over the political tactics that should be adopted in facing the threat of abolition. In October 1831, The Port of Spain Gazette was particularly appalled by editorials that had appeared in The Trinidad Guardian:

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[6]Figures for the year 1830.

[7]The Barbadian, 20 March 1833.

> ... when we see him publishing sentiments calculated to spread needless terror and alarm - when we read sentence after sentence, conveying his opinion as plainly as words can, that the inhabitants of this colony are in a "perilous situation", and in "alarming circumstances", we know not whether to think the man more knave or fool...[8]

Despite these differences of opinion the term the 'planter press' remains a meaningful expression. It denotes the large group of West Indian newspapers which were politically tied to the white planting class and resolutely opposed to Imperial encroachment on colonial rights.

Because of their advocacy of abolition the three white-owned liberal newspapers can only be described as colonial anomalies. The equivocal motives of Young Anderson and George Busteed were discussed in Chapters Three and Six. For James Scotland Snr. it is worth repeating that the only explanation for his actions would seem to be that he was a man driven by a such a strong sense of purpose that he was willing to endure incarceration, calumny, economic difficulties, and social ostracism. These three men are indicative of the caution that is needed when discussing the white elite; reading the editorials in much of the planter press might lead to the supposition that all whites were utterly opposed to any progress towards the abolition of slavery. However, an analysis of colonial society in terms of rigidly-defined blocs runs up against this evidence which clearly does not conform to the pattern. That there were a majority of whites who opposed colonial reform is certainly true; but in their different ways George Busteed, Young Anderson, and James Scotland show that white society was not completely impervious to abolitionist sentiment. As

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[8]The Port of Spain Gazette, 26 October 1831.

an official in the colonial Government, Busteed was an outsider who was not representative of the majority of colonial whites, but he was still a part of white society. Anderson and Scotland were creoles, and in this respect they are significant figures. These men were exceptional in that they proclaimed their views in probably the most public manner that was possible at the time - through the press. They may have been isolated figures, but both Anderson and Scotland claimed that there were other colonists who held abolitionist views. According to Scotland, in Antigua these people were intimidated by the power of the colonial oligarchy, and refused to speak for fear of the consequences.

The political development of the free coloured press in the late 1820's was an indication of the growing importance of that class. Free coloured newspapers in St. Kitts and Antigua were not a new phenomenon. In the case of St. Kitts a free coloured newspaper had definitely predated the 1820's by some fifteen years and probably longer. However, printing had been 'open' to free coloureds only in an economic sense. Before the 1830's there is no evidence that The St. Kitts Advertiser had carried any significant political weight, and the editor of The Weekly Register imposed self-censorship for fear of antagonising the white elite. It is interesting that The Register, The Demerary And Essequebo [sic] Royal Gazette and The Barbados Mercury were all at some stage in the same politically-neutered position. This situation clearly shows how race influenced editorial decisions; fearing white condemnation from above, The Register had been politically cautious; fearing slave unrest from below, The Demerary Gazette and The Barbados Mercury had exercised similar caution.

By the late 1820's the political situation had radically changed for both whites and free coloureds, and the latter class had started to explore the political potential of the press. Edward Jordon, Robert Osborn, and Henry Loving led this innovation, but their example was not followed either by William Baker in Grenada or Samuel Cable in St. Kitts. The editorials written by Baker and Cable show that not all free coloureds were prepared to embrace the political cause of their class in the outspoken manner that others had done. As with whites, it would be a mistake to treat the free coloured class in the British Caribbean as a bloc who all espoused the same political views. In a way William Baker can be used by the historian in the same manner as James Scotland Snr. Both men occupied editorial ground that was in some ways incongruous. Like Scotland, Baker's political views - which were highly sympathetic to the planter cause - militate against any categorisation of the colonial press solely on the grounds of colour. Baker seems to have been one of that group of free coloureds who for economic, political, and psychological reasons were drawn to the white sector of the populace. If Baker's editorial stance really was an attempt to gain white acceptance there is evidence that it failed; political loyalty was not enough to prevent the Grenadan Grand Jury seeking to prosecute him on one occasion.[9]

This development of several distinct strands of newspaper thought represented a widening of colonial political culture; a process which varied to some extent because of the different histories and circumstances of individual colonies. In the oldest group of Legislative colonies the widening process was an extension of white participatory politics that already had firm roots. In contrast, the Crown colonies had experienced different histories in which these participatory traditions had not been as prominent.

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[9]The Grenada Chronicle, 7 June 1834.

Yet the newspapers which emerged in Demerara-Essequibo and Trinidad after they were ceded to Britain were as politically vigorous as those in the Legislative colonies. St. Lucia was an exceptional case, but even there newspapers which had all the hallmarks of the British press quickly flourished once they were established on a private basis.[10] In Demerara the press was arguably more politically outspoken than in some of the Legislative colonies because newspapers spent much of the 1820's and early 1830's fighting against an executive hostile to the freedom of the press. The emergence of politically outspoken newspapers occurred at least partly because the British retained foreign modes of governance. The absence of representative institutions of Government inflated the importance of newspapers because some of the functions which would have been performed by an Assembly devolved onto the press.

The widening of colonial political culture was also evinced by the emergence of a common editorial mentality which underpinned colonial newspapers. In the course of the 1820's most editors came to agree on the essential purpose of a colonial newspaper; they felt strongly that newspapers had critically to review colonial affairs and if necessary exert pressure on those in authority. As has been stressed above, the growth of this editorial mentality was inextricably linked to the approach of abolition. When a stubborn sense of independence appeared in liberal papers which supported the British Government political confrontations with the institutions controlled by the colonists became inevitable. Due to the convergence of political interests between planter newspapers and these institutions the planter press did not become caught up in disputes of this kind. However, the planter press did clash with those elements of the authorities which were not under the control of the colonists; the executive, and

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[10]Breen, St. Lucia, pp.268-270.

in some cases judicial officials. These disputes often stemmed from a straightforward combination of strong editorial purpose and political opposition; this combination of elements continued to create conflict after the abolition of slavery. It reappeared in Grenada in 1839 where, in an echo of earlier incidents, the editor of The Grenada Free Press, John McCombie, was imprisoned by the colony's Chief Justice on legally questionable grounds. It needed the intervention of the Governor to secure McCombie's release.[11] In St. Lucia, during the early 1840's there were similar tensions involving the editor of The Palladium, Charles Wells.[12]

Editorial principles based on independently-minded criticism did not cause friction between planter newspapers and colonists in authority, provided it was applied to the common cause of resisting abolition. Abolition was all-engrossing, tortuous, and bitterly contested; so much so that it is easy to forget that the political life of the colonies was influenced by other concerns. When editorial independence intruded into these concerns it often led to conflicts between planter newspapers and the authorities under the control of the colonists - two parties which in the broad political sense were on the same side. Although a newspaper could accept and endorse without question the tenets of white superiority which under-pinned West Indian slavery, such loyalty did not guarantee a conflict-free relationship with the colonial authorities. The conflicts which occurred between planter newspapers and the Assembly suggest that beneath the alliance of political interests created by the defence of slavery the actual relationship was inherently confrontational. This antagonism exists between most

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[11]For documents on the McCombie case see the relevant section in C.O.101/88. John McCombie was the son of Alexander McCombie; he took over as editor of the paper in August 1837.

[12]See Cave, 'Early Printing,' p.187; Lent, Third World Mass Communications, p.29.

official authorities and those people who pass public judgement on them; arguably, it is a feature of any society where there are newspapers which are free and independent.

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The potential for conflicts stemming from this relationship appeared in several colonies in the years before abolition. It had surfaced intermittently in Jamaica since the final years of the eighteenth century, and there are other examples where colonial Assemblies demanded apologies from editors who had offended in some way.[13] The likelihood of conflicts of this type occurring may have been increased by the inferior 'quality' of whites who occupied posts in Government. The poor character of white colonial society was allegedly caused by absenteeism; it has been argued that once in power poor quality whites who substituted for absentees keenly promoted class distinctions between themselves and others.[14] This tendency would have sharpened the potential for conflict with the press because such people would not have been prepared to accept public criticism. Despite a basic antipathy between the press and the colonial authorities, in only one case was it translated into law, and then only partially so. In 1830 the Antiguan Assembly passed a law restricting publication of letters from the colony's agent.[15] The Antigua Free Press complained bitterly, but the law seems to have stood. More forceful attempts to restrict the press wholesale were made by the Dominican and Jamaican Assemblies, but the laws which they passed were disqualified at higher Governmental levels.[16]

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[13]See Brathwaite, Development of Creole Society, pp.37-39.

[14]Cox, Free Coloreds of St. Kitts And Grenada, p.17.

[15]The Antigua Free Press, 26 February 1830.

[16]See above p.257.

In some notable instances the common editorial belief about the value and importance of the press was strong enough to overcome political differences that would otherwise have been unbridgeable. For example, Alexander McCombie's commitment to the planter cause did not stop him expressing serious misgivings about the imprisonment of James Scotland. This was not out of sympathy with Scotland's political views which McCombie despised, but came from his belief that an editor should not be imprisoned simply because he had printed political views that were unpalatable to the authorities. McCombie wrote:

> The freedom of the press, the great palladium of British liberty, is not subject to the dictum of any body of men, nor can it be controlled by any authority vested in a Grand Jury...[17]

It was a view which appeared elsewhere. The Dominica Colonist went so far as to state that:

> The cause of Mr. Scotland is the cause of the whole of these Colonies - if that which has been done in Antigua be permitted to drown its iniquity in oblivion, the same measures will be attempted elsewhere... We hope and trust there does not exist a single Paper in these islands that will hesitate to declare its sentiments on this infraction of the rights of a free people in a free government...[18]

Other newspapers, such as The St. Kitts Gazette and The Port of Spain Gazette, known to be hostile to Scotland's political views, stepped forward in his defence. The

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[17]The Grenada Free Press, 2 November 1831, reprinted in The Antigua Free Press, 24 November 1831.

[18]The Dominica Colonist, 26 November 1831, reprinted in The Antigua Free Press, 1 December 1831.

Trinidad Guardian on the other hand, firm in its hatred of an alleged colonial traitor, gloated over Scotland's imprisonment.

This cross-colony concern about judicial and governmental malpractice was evident in many of the other conflicts involving the press which have been examined. Strained relationships between the press and the colonial authorities were used by some newspapers as a barometer to gauge political freedom. This was particularly so in the Crown colonies. The struggles between The Colonist, The Guiana Chronicle, and Sir Benjamin D'Urban were widely reported in various colonial papers, and these reports eventually reached the British press. The Courier denounced the 1825 suppression of The Guiana Chronicle as an indictment of the entire system of Crown colony Government:

> ... the editor of The Guiana Chronicle, published at Demerara, has returned to England, being banished from the colony, after the suppression of his paper.
>
> This is the fact, and the particulars are of a nature to excite horror at the system of Colonial Government of which this Gentleman has been a victim.[19]

The problems in re-establishing The Chronicle which Alexander Stevenson faced when he returned to Demerara were viewed by The Barbadian as proof that 'the public press is as much under the control of the Executive as ever.'[20] In 1833, Sir Benjamin D'Urban was appointed Governor of the Cape and The Barbados Globe reviewed his attempts to 'stifle all free discussion' in the colony which had been under his charge for nine years. The paper concluded that D'Urban's appointment to the Cape would

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[19]Undated report from The Courier, reprinted in The Dominica Chronicle, 5 July 1826.

[20]The Barbadian, 8 September 1826.

'relieve the Colonists of British Guiana of a detested ruler.'[21] Similar strictures were also passed upon the Governor of Trinidad. In 1825, The St. Vincent Advertiser said of Sir Ralph Woodford, that he had 'evinced a spirit to command and rule the press according to his own will and pleasure.'[22] In Antigua the tension between the press and the colonial authorities which characterised the period between 1829 and 1834 attracted the attention of other colonial newspapers. The Guiana Chronicle described the situation in 1829 in robust terms:

> There seems to be in Antigua more of what is base in party spirit than in any other of our West Indian colonies - a party who wish to have everything their own way... who unite in one unprincipled confederation to put down all those who are not of their caste and creed... It required [sic] no great compass of ingenuity to perceive, that the press was a dangerous neighbour for such a combination... it might be expected that efforts would be made to *burke* so dangerous and vigilant a neighbour.[23]

The Barbados Globe remarked on an 'inveterate hostility... against the freedom of the press' which was prevalent in Antigua.[24]

Comments in the colonial press about the status of newspapers in other colonies, and by implication the extent of colonial political freedom, could never be organised into anything more substantial. Although the Leewards were reunited under a single administration in 1833, and the Windwards also, the political development of

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[21]The Barbados Globe, 2 May 1833.

[22]The St. Vincent Advertiser, quoted in The Port of Spain Gazette, 3 December 1825.

[23]The Guiana Chronicle, 25 September 1829, reprinted in The Antigua Free Press, 30 October 1829.

[24]The Barbados Globe, 12 November 1829.

the West Indian colonies in general had not reached the point where a common legal and constitutional standard regarding the press could be introduced.[25] Inter-island jealousy also militated against one colony interfering with another's business. Although a newspaper might pass critical comment on another island's treatment of an editor, in practical terms it could achieve nothing beyond publicising the case. In 1825, the statement of support from The Antigua Free Press for William Stewart epitomised the limited support one editor could express for a colleague beleaguered by governmental hostility:

> ... we do not wish to intermeddle in the Party feuds of other colonies, yet, as the treatment which Mr Stewart has experienced has been severe in the extreme, to say the least of it, we feel ourselves called on to give his statement fuller publicity.[26]

There were then obvious and insurmountable limits to a newspaper's influence. Despite this fact, in 1826 Michael Ryan made a point of renaming his newspaper The Barbados Globe And Demerara Advocate. This was in response to the repressive actions of Sir Benjamin D'Urban.[27] Ryan's aim was 'to advocate the cause of the insulted and oppressed inhabitants of Demerara and Essequebo.' Ryan's gesture was typical of the press of the period, but it was basically futile, and in February 1829 he complained about the lack of interest in the paper shown by Demeraran readers.[28] The press was in a similar, essentially impotent situation, with regard to its protesta-

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[25]Burns, History of The British West Indies, pp.645-646.

[26]The Antigua Free Press, 22 April 1825, reprinted in The Dominica Chronicle, 11 May 1825.

[27]See Ryan's announcement of 10 July 1826, reprinted in The Trinidad Guardian, 11 August 1826.

[28]The Barbados Globe, 16 February 1829.

tions against the British Government. Although the trans-Atlantic exchange of newspapers ensured that the West Indian press did indirectly contribute something to political discourse at the Imperial level, a colonial paper's effective sphere of influence was parochial. Vital political decisions were made in London and no amount of editorial spleen could change the fact.

The political momentum towards abolition and the increasing assertiveness of free coloureds led to a distinct phase in colonial press history. Arguably, the colonial papers which developed and flourished in the 1820's and early 1830's were unique. Patterns of political behaviour had emerged in consequence of new political conditions; variations in this political activity reflected the different motivations and goals of the various ethnic groups. For most whites it meant mounting a defence of the fundamental structure of a slave-based society. The letters page and the editorial column of the local paper gave them a chance to express opposition to the changes being imposed by the British Government. For free coloureds the change in the political climate meant pressing for civil and political rights, and in some cases expressing concern over the plight of the slaves. Many free coloureds gravitated towards behaviour patterns displayed by their white progenitors, which in terms of political activity meant adopting English norms of participatory behaviour; politicised newspapers, memorials of grievances, and committees of correspondence. Of course, most whites automatically assumed that only they had the right to behave in such a way, and they were deeply troubled by the radical free coloured editors who acted without white sanction. Whites saw these men utilising participatory political traditions which until that point had been the exclusive preserve of the ruling elite. Their

response was to intimidate the two main exponents of this innovation. In turn, Edward Jordon and Henry Loving responded with a stronger political commitment. White political activity also sent a series of signals to the non-free population which were beyond the control of the ruling class. To the slaves, the anger and confusion among their masters were proof that slavery was under threat. Their response was to organise strikes, unrest, and insurrection, creating panic among whites. Thus, it could be argued that the more vociferously the planter press opposed the British Government's West Indian policy the greater was its contribution to bringing abolition nearer. In seeking to defend the pre-eminent position of their race, whites weakened colonial society by sharpening racial divisions and antagonisms. The resulting colonial instability, which reached a peak with the 1831 Jamaican revolt, brought an imposed settlement closer.

By 1835 the factors which had provided much of the impetus for the growth of this phase of colonial press history were exhausted. By then the colonial Legislatures had conceded political and civil rights to the free coloureds, and slavery had been abolished. In some ways these changes were more apparent than real, but the advances made by free coloureds and the abolition of slavery were crucial developments. Before abolition, the planter press, as part of a ruling class on the defensive, had fought to conserve white supremacy. In contrast, the liberal press had been part of the political offensive, campaigning for free coloured rights and the abolition of slavery. By adopting these different political priorities, the press had helped to contribute to the tensions which had gripped the colonies. Abolition changed the political landscape and with it the charged political atmosphere that had prevailed in the 1820's and early 1830's.

Ultimately, this study cannot measure precisely the political effects of the West Indian press. Although we do know how certain individuals reacted to newspapers, tracing the full impact of newspapers upon societies as complex as the British West Indian colonies is impossible. The different ethnic groups have left no substantial evidence about their collective attitudes to newspapers; the effects of the press are too indistinct to discern accurately, so they have to be inferred. However, the important place of newspapers in colonial political life does mean that they constitute valuable evidence, which in the final analysis can be used in two main ways. Firstly, newspapers can be used to enhance the overall picture which we have of societies which were on the verge of fundamental change. This broadly-based methodological approach can be used to support statements about a whole range of topics, and it subsumes the role of the press within large-scale historical developments. For example, the venomous denunciations of the British Government by the planter press can be cited as proof of the intensity of the political excitement in the colonies. The white-owned liberal papers show a different side to this excitement, and prove that the white elite was not an entirely monolithic bloc. The problems posed by The Trinidad Courant and The Guiana Chronicle were evidence of the difficulties which the British experienced in governing their Crown colonies. Two of the free coloured newspapers were indicative of the growing strength and political awareness of that class, and the other two indicate the variety of free coloured responses to their social position. The editor-politician figures were indicative of the small gap that many felt existed between the printing office and a seat in the Assembly. The fact that men accomplished the move from journalism into politics indicates that political opportunities existed within the white elite for those not directly connected with the plantation economy.

A second, more intimate approach to the press is to use the events which have been referred to as incidental evidence of colonial life at ground level. Viewed in this way these events constitute a series of snapshots which contain details often absent from official correspondence. Perhaps the most noteworthy part of the thesis in this respect is the sheer resilience of many newspaper editors. Some of them continued to produce their papers in the face of seemingly endless financial, political, and social discouragements. Numerous appeals to lax subscribers show how economically marginalised newspapers were; the loss of financial lifelines in the form of printing contracts had to be overcome; draining political battles were fought against corrupt Judges and Assemblymen, and unsympathetic Governors; public whippings and attacks were suffered; duels were fought; men preferred jail sentences to the betrayal and compromise of their editorial principles. This shows the remarkable degree of commitment that colonial editors brought to the printing industry; a commitment which enabled them to overcome innumerable setbacks.

The final picture which emerges of West Indian newspapers in this period is complex and deeply paradoxical. Newspapers were vital to the functioning of the sugar economy, yet they did not actually contribute anything material to it, and were themselves economically frail. Slavery created a number of inescapable editorial problems, and as the men behind the press attempted to deal with them there developed a surprisingly varied press tradition. Instead of the political uniformity which might have been expected we find newspapers of great political vibrancy and variety. The press was an important part of political life, but it was unable to effect change at any level. Newspapers had a pan-colonial dimension, and contributed to political discourse at Imperial level, yet they were rooted in the circumstances of the home colony.

Above all, there is a sense that the colonial press which had emerged from British journalistic traditions had outgrown this base and, stamped by the political dramas of the 1820's and early 1830's, had become intrinsically West Indian in character.

APPENDIX

Location	Abbreviation
American Antiquarian Society	AAS microfilm
The British Library Newspaper Library, Colindale	Colindale
Public Record Office, Colonial Office	PRO : CO

NEWSPAPER	ISSUES CONSULTED	LOCATION	PUBLICATION DAY(S)	ANNUAL SUBSCRIP-TION	MANAGEMENT
ANTIGUA					
The Antigua Free Press Founded c.1824 Probably closed c. May 1835	Aug. 1826 to May 1835 (incomplete)	Colindale: C Misc 209.a PRO: CO 10/1	Thursday	$6	**Robert Priest** Proprietor, printer, publisher and editor c.1824 to 2 Sep. 1830 **James Scotland Snr.** Proprietor and editor 10 Sep. 1830 to c. May 1835
The Weekly Register Founded c.1814	Jan. 1827 to May 1838 (incomplete)	PRO: CO 10/1 AAS microfilm	Tuesday	$6	**Henry Loving** Proprietor, printer, publisher and editor 1814 to 1815 **Henry Loving & William Hill** Partnership which owned, printed, published and edited the paper. 1815 to 11 Jul. 1827 **Henry Loving & Sarah Hill** Partnership Jul. 1827 to May 1833
The Antigua Herald and Gazette Founded Jan. 1832	May 1833 to Dec. 1836 (incomplete)	AAS microfilm	Saturday	$6	The Herald was founded and owned by a group (number unknown) of Antiguan whites. **Thomas Warner** Editor Jan. 1832 to ?

NEWSPAPER	ISSUES CONSULTED	LOCATION	PUBLICATION DAY(S)	ANNUAL SUBSCRIP-TION	MANAGEMENT
BARBADOS					
The Barbadian Founded Dec. 1822	Dec. 1822 to Dec. 1834 and beyond (virtually complete)	Colindale: MC 479 PRO: CO 33/4	Wednesday and Saturday From Mar. 1824 Tuesday and Friday	$6 $8 if sent to other islands $8 $10 if sent to other islands	**Abel Clinckett** Proprietor, printer, publisher and editor Dec. 1822 to c.1856
The Barbados Globe Founded Oct.1818; became **The Barbados Globe and Demerara Advocate** Jul. 1826; then **The Barbados Globe and Colonial Advocate** Aug. 1830	Feb. 1829 to Dec. 1836 and beyond	PRO: CO 33/1, 4	Monday and Thursday	$6	**Michael Ryan** Proprietor, printer, publisher and editor Oct .1818 to Apr. 1830. **Mary Ryan** Proprietor, printer, publisher and editor May 1830 to Jan. 1834. **Andrew Drinan** married Mary Ryan and was associated with the paper Jan. 1834 to c.1866.

NEWSPAPER	ISSUES CONSULTED	LOCATION	PUBLICATION DAY(S)	ANNUAL SUBSCRIP-TION	MANAGEMENT
BARBADOS					
The Barbados Mercury and Bridgetown Gazette Founded c.1762	1805 to 1825 (virtually complete) A few issues for early 1833	Colindale: MC 1888 PRO: CO 33/4	Tuesday and Saturday	$6	**William Walker** Proprietor, printer, publisher and editor Jan. 1811 to c. Apr. 1826. **John Wooding** Proprietor, printer, publisher and occasional editor c. Sep 1826 to c.1831. **John Jervis** employed by John Wooding as editor during early 1830s. **Thomasina Walker & Samuel Hyde** Partnership c. Feb. 1832 to probably mid-1833
The West Indian Founded Nov. 1833	A few issues for late 1833	PRO: CO 33/4	Monday and Thursday	$6 $8 if sent to other islands	**Samuel Hyde** Proprietor, printer,publisher and editor Nov. 1833 to c. Dec. 1836
DOMINICA					
The Dominica Chronicle Founded Mar. 1813 Closed Jun. 1827	Jan. 1821to Dec. 1822 Jan. 1825 to Jun. 1827 (virtually complete)	Colindale: MC 448a	Wednesday	unknown	**William Foster Stewart** Proprietor, printer, publisher and editor Mar. 1813 to Jun. 1827

NEWSPAPER	ISSUES CONSULTED	LOCATION	PUBLICATION DAY(S)	ANNUAL SUBSCRIP-TION	MANAGEMENT
GRENADA					
The Grenada Free Press and Public Gazette Founded Dec. 1826	Jan. 1832 to Dec. 1832 (complete)	AAS microfilm	Wednesday	$8	**Alexander McCombie** Proprietor, printer, publisher and editor 1826 to Aug. 1837 **John McCombie**, A. McCombie's son, employed as editor from Aug. 1837
The St George's Chronicle and Grenada Gazette Founded c.1789	Apr. 1834 to Dec. 1834 and beyond (incomplete)	PRO: CO 105/1	Saturday	$8	**William Baker** Proprietor, printer, publisher and editor, c.1827 to c.1836
GUYANA					
The Guiana Chronicle and Demerary Gazette Founded c.1814	Jan. 1819 to Dec. 1822 (virtually complete) 1835 to early 1840s (virtually complete)	Colindale: MC 552 PRO: CO 116/1, 2, 3	Monday, Wednesday and Friday	2 Joes	**Alexander Stevenson** Proprietor, printer, publisher and occasional editor c.1814 to c. Oct. 1839 **William Towart** employed as editor c. early 1820s **Matthew Barker** employed as editor latter half of 1825

NEWSPAPER	ISSUES CONSULTED	LOCATION	PUBLICATION DAY(S)	ANNUAL SUBSCRIP-TION	MANAGEMENT
JAMAICA					
The Watchman and Jamaica Free Press Founded Jan. 1829; became **The Jamaica Watchman** in May 1832	Jan. 1832 to 1836 (incomplete)	PRO: CO 142/1, 2	Wednesday and Saturday	no subscrip-tion price	**Edward Jordon & Robert Osborn** Partnership which owned, printed, published and edited the paper. 1829 to c.1838
ST VINCENT					
The Royal St Vincent Gazette and General/ Weekly Advertiser Founded 1784	A few issues for 1831 and 1832	PRO: CO 264/1	Saturday	£3 5s £4 if delivered up country and to other islands	**James Adams & John Drape** Partnership c.1810 **John Drape** Proprietor, printer, publisher and editor 1818 to c.1854
The Royal St Vincent Gazette By Authority Founded Feb. 1826	A few issues for 1832	PRO: CO 264/1	Thursday	65s	**Thomas Legall** Proprietor, printer, publisher and editor, Feb.1826 to ?

NEWSPAPER	ISSUES CONSULTED	LOCATION	PUBLICATION DAY(S)	ANNUAL SUBSCRIP-TION	MANAGEMENT
TRINIDAD					
The Trinidad Gazette Founded Sep. 1820	Sep. 1820 to Dec.1822 (virtually complete)	Colindale: M Misc 318	Wednesday & Saturday	£5	**William Lewer** Proprietor, printer and publisher (editor unknown) Sep. 1820 to Sep. 1825
The Trinidad Guardian Founded Oct. 1825 Closed Nov. 1831	Jan. 1826 to Nov. 1831 (incomplete)	PRO: CO 300/1, 2, 3	Friday	£4 £5 if sent to other islands	**John Irwin** Proprietor, printer, and publisher 1825 to 1827
			Bi-weekly from Jun. 1826 Tuesday and Friday	£6 £8 if sent to other islands	**John Shoel** employed as editor from 1825 to Nov. 1831. In Jun. 1827 he became Irwin's partner.

NEWSPAPER	ISSUES CONSULTED	LOCATION	PUBLICATION DAY(S)	ANNUAL SUBSCRIP-TION	MANAGEMENT
TRINIDAD					
The Port of Spain Gazette Founded Sep. 1825	Sep. 1825 to Jan. 1835 and beyond (virtually complete)	Colindale: MC 520 PRO: CO 300/2	Wednesday and Saturday From Sep. 1832 Tuesday and Friday	£5	**John Holman & Co** Partnership which owned, printed, published and edited the paper Sep. 1825 to Sep. 1829 **John Holman & William Belk** Partnership Sep. 1829 to Nov. 1829 **William Belk** Proprietor, printer, publisher and editor Nov. 1829 **John Holman & Henry Mills** Partnership which owned, printed, published and edited the paper Nov. 1829 to May 1832 **Henry Mills & William Foster Stewart** Partnership which owned, printed and published the paper. May 1832 to Jan. 1834 **Andrew Drinan** employed as editor Jan. 1832 to May 1833. **Henry Mills** was involved with the paper until his death in May 1870.

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Virtually all the manuscript sources for this thesis are at the Public Record Office, Kew, in the Colonial Office files.

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C.O.714/2, chronological index of despatches from the Governor to the Secretary of State, 1815-1846.
C.O.714/4, alphabetical index of despatches from the Governor to the Secretary of State, 1815-1870.
These indexes, and the others which are listed, were invaluable in finding information relating to the press and people connected with the press.

The series C.O.7 contains the Governor's official correspondence with the Secretary of State.
Volumes 31, 32 (Offices and Individuals, with special sections devoted to James Scotland Snr. and Henry Loving), 33, and 34 were of particular importance in tracing the impact of The Weekly Register and The Antigua Free Press in the early 1830's.
Further despatches concerning Scotland and Loving are in volumes 36, 39, 43, 66, 84, 89, 93, 95, and 96.

The series C.O.393 contains the letters sent to the Governor by the Secretary of State.
Relevant volumes were 3 and 5 (1827-1836).
Volume 4 (1830-1839), contains domestic correspondence relating to Antigua.

BARBADOS

C.O.714/20, chronological index of despatches from the Governor to the Secretary of State, 1815-1840.
C.O.714/23, alphabetical index of despatches from the Governor to the Secretary of State, 1816-1869.

The series C.O.28 contains the Governor's official correspondence with the Secretary of State.
Volumes 88 and 92 were consulted for information connected with The Barbados Globe during 1819 and 1823. Volume 113 has details of a minor fracas in 1834 which involved two of the colony's editors.

The series C.O.31 contains the sessional papers of the Barbados Legislature.
The Journals of the Assembly in volumes 49, 51, and 52 (1819-1838), were used to establish the financial value of the contract to print work for the Assembly, and to trace the troubled relationship between The Globe and the Legislature.

Volumes 48 and 50 contains the minutes of the Barbados Executive and Privy Councils (1818 and 1831).

DOMINICA

C.O.714/50, chronological index of despatches from the Governor to the Secretary of State, 1815-1848.
C.O.714/52, alphabatical index of despatches from the

Governor to the Secretary of State, 1815-1870.
The series C.O.71 contains the Governor's official correspondence with the Secretary of State.
Volumes 59, 61, 63 contain despatches from the early and mid-1820's concerning the colony's press. Volume 74 covers the first six months of 1832, and has material connected with The Dominica Colonist.

The series C.O.74 contains the sessional papers of the Dominica Legislature. Volumes 14, 16, and 17 are the Journals of the Assembly (1818-1828), and contain much information on events involving The Dominica Chronicle. Volume 15 has the minutes of the colony's Legislative Council (1818-1825), which were useful.

The series C.O.72 contains the letters sent to the Governor by the Secretary of State.
Volume 11 (1815-1829), was consulted.

GRENADA

C.O.714/68, chronological index of despatches from the Governor to the Secretary of State, 1815-1852.
C.O.714/70, alphabetical index of despatches from the Governor to the Secretary of State, 1815-1870.

The series C.O.104 contains the sessional papers of the colony's Legislature. The Journals of the House of Assembly and the minutes of the Council in volumes 11 and 12 (1824-1832), were consulted to determine the manner in which The Grenada Free Press was founded in 1826.

JAMAICA

C.O.714/85, chronological index of despatches from the Governor to the Secretary of State, 1815-1832.
C.O.714/86, chronological index of despatches from the Governor to the Secretary of State, 1833-1848.
C.O.714/89, alphabetical index of despatches from the Governor to the Secretary of State, 1815-1870.

A single volume of correspondence from the Governor to the Secretary of State was consulted, C.O.137/183 (August-December 1832).

The series C.O.140 contains the sessional papers of the colony's Legislature. The Journals of the Assembly in volumes 117, 121, and 122 (1829-1832), and 128 (1836-1837), were used.

ST. CHRISTOPHER

C.O.714/131, chronological index of despatches from the Governor to the Secretary of State, 1816-1849.
C.O.714/133, alphabetical index of despatches from the Governor to the Secretary of State, 1816-1852.

The series C.O.239 contains the official correspondence from the Governor to the Secretary of State. Volumes 14, 40, 42, and 46 were consulted. Volumes 40 and 42 provided much information on the imprisonment and release of Samuel Cable in September and October 1835.

The series C.O.407 contains the letters sent to the Governor by the Secretary of State.
Volume 5 (1832-1837), was consulted.

ST. LUCIA

C.O.714/137, chronological index of despatches from the Governor to the Secretary of State, 1816-1848.
C.O.714/139, alphabetical index of despatches from the Governor to the Secretary of State, 1816-1852.

The series C.O.253 contains the official correspondence from the Governor to the Secretary of State.
Volumes 26, 27, 29, 30, 37, 38, and 39 contain the documents relevant to George Busteed's career as chief Government Secretary (December 1829 to January 1832), and the poor state of the colony's printing industry in general.

The series C.O.254 contains the letters sent to the Governor by the Secretary of State.
Volume 9 contains the orders from the Secretary of State sent between December 1831 and February 1832, suppressing The St. Lucia Gazette and removing George Busteed from office.
Volume 8 also contains material relating to Offices and Individuals. The series of letters written during 1832 by the Under Secretary of State, Viscount Howick, to the various members of the Busteed family who were seeking to regain offical patronage, are filed in this volume.

ST. VINCENT

C.O.714/140, chronological index of despatches from the Governor to the Secretary of State, 1815-1846.
C.O.714/142, alphabetical index of despatches from the Governor to the Secretary of State, 1816-1870.

The series C.O.260 contains the official correspondence from the Governor to the Secretary of State.
Volumes 42, 49, and 50 (1825-1832), contain despatches concerning the long-running dispute in the colony over the allocation of Government printing.

The series C.O.261 contains the letters sent to the Governor by the Secretary of State.
Volume 14 deals with Offices and Individuals (1824-1842). Volume 15 contains despatches (1830-1842).

The series C.O.263 contain the sessional papers of the colony's Legislature.
Volume 6 contains the minutes of the Privy and Legislative Councils, and the Journals of the Assembly.
Volume 7 contains the minutes of the Council and the Assembly.
The minutes of the Assembly for October 1832 are missing from the sessional papers in C.O.263. Extracts detailing the electoral rivalry between John Drape and Thomas LeGall can, however, be found in a despatch in C.O.260/49.

TOBAGO

C.O.714/154, chronological index of despatches from the Governor to the Secretary of State, 1815-1847.
C.O.714/156, alphabetical index of despatches from the Governor to the Secretary of State, 1815-1852.

A single volume of correspondence (on microfilm), was consulted to confirm that a newspaper - The Tobago Gazette - was established in the colony in October 1807; C.O.285/12.

TRINIDAD

C.O.714/157, chronological index of despatches from the Governor to the Secretary of State, 1797-1838.
There is no alphabetical index of these despatches.

The series C.O.295 contains the official correspondence from the Governor to the Secretary of State.
Information concerning the evolution of the Trinidadian press (1810-1834), is scattered throughout volumes 23, 24, 26, 27, 53, 55, 65, 67, 80, 88, 92, 93, 94, 96, 97, 98, 99, 101, 102, 103.

The series C.O.296 is on microfilm and contains the letters sent to the Governor by the Secretary of State. Volumes 5 (1810-1824), and 11 (1832-1835), were consulted.

In addition, the minutes of the Trinidad Executive and Legislative Councils (1831-1832), contained in C.O.298/9 proved useful.

GUYANA

C.O.714/71, is listed as the chronological index of despatches from the Lt. Governor of British Guiana (which did not technically exist until 1831), to the Secretary of State, 1815-1831.
C.O.714/72, is the alphabetical index of despatches sent to the Secretary of State, 1815-1827.
C.O.714/73, is listed as the chronological index of despatches from the Lt. Governor of Demerara and British Guiana to the Secretary of State, 1815-1833.
C.O.714/74, is listed as the alphabetical index of despatches from the Lt. Governor of Demerara-Essequibo to the Secretary of State, 1815-1852.
C.O.714/75, chronological index of despatches from the Governor of British Guiana to the Secretary of State, 1834-1846.

The series C.O.111 contains the official correspondence from the Lt. Governor to the Secretary of State. Information on the development of the press in Berbice (1820-1831), is in volumes 92, 104, 106, and 114.
Volumes 30, 34, 44, 45, 50, 55, 56, 60, 72, 116, 126, 127, 131, 133, 138, 146, and 166 contain a large amount of material on the press in Demerara (1819-1836).
Volumes 32 and 35 are devoted to William Rough's voluminous correspondence (1820-1821), with Henry Goulburn, then the Under Secretary of State.
Volume 44 is the trial of the missionary John Smith; it contains Alexander Stevenson's evidence against Smith.

The series C.O.112 contains the letters sent to the Lt. Governors by the Secretary of State.
Volume 9 contains despatches relating to events in Berbice.
Volumes 5, 6, 15, 18, and 20 contain the response of the Colonial Office to the difficult situation in Demerara regarding The Guiana Chronicle in the 1820's and early 1830's.

A number of miscellaneous volumes from the Colonial Office files were used:
C.O.949/1, index to circular despatches, 1808-1869.
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C.O.318/76, contains memorials and papers submitted by free coloureds of various colonies to the Commission investigating legal practices in the West Indies.
C.O.323/48, Law Officers' Reports on Colonial Acts 1831-1832.
C.O.323/50, Law Officers' Reports on Colonial Acts 1834.

MISCELLANEOUS MANUSCRIPT

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Grenada; C.O.106.
Jamaica; C.O.142.
St. Kitts; C.O.143.
St. Lucia; C.O.258.
St. Vincent; C.O.265.
Trinidad; C.O.300.
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BARBADOS

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The Barbados Globe And Demerara/Colonial Advocate

The Barbadian

The West Indian

DOMINICA

The Dominica Chronicle

The Dominica Colonist

The Dominican

The Dominica Guardian

GRENADA

The Grenada Free Press And Public Gazette

The St. George Chronicle And Grenada Gazette

JAMAICA

The Jamaica Mercury And Kingston Weekly Advertiser

The Jamaica Journal

The Royal Gazette

The Watchman And Jamaica Free Press/The Jamaica Watchman

ST. KITTS

The St. Christopher Advertiser And Weekly Intelligencer

The St. Christopher Gazette, And Charibbean [sic] Courier

ST. LUCIA

L'Impartial Journal Politique, Commercial, et Litteraire de Sainte Lucie

The Palladium And St. Lucia Free Press

The Independent Press

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ST. VINCENT

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TOBAGO

The Tobago Gazette

The Tobago Chronicle And Royal Gazette

The Tobago Gazette And West Indian News

TRINIDAD

The Trinidad Weekly Courant

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The Port of Spain Gazette

The Royal Gazette

The Colonial Observer And Trinidad Gazette

DEMERARA-ESSEQUIBO AND BERBICE

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